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**The Public Image of Security, Defence  
and the Military in Europe**



# Public Image of Security

## Defence and the Military in Europe

*Edited by*

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Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces  
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Defence and the Military  
in Europe**

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## Preface

**Ambassador Dr. Theodor Winkler**  
Director DCAF, Geneva

This book is the first outcome of the Working Group on Military and Society, which was launched by the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces at a workshop held in Prague during November 2002. At this event, a framework of military-society relations, that is relevant for Geneva DCAF, was established and the topics for the working group's future activities were set out. Amongst these issues was the public perception of the more substantial security and defence processes that came into existence after the end of the Cold War.

The post-Cold War transformation of armed forces has been the most visible result of a much broader reform of the security sector, its salience arising from the potential effect on states' sovereignty, and encompassing the size of their organizational structure, personnel and budget. This reform is deeply embedded in the overall transition towards a democratic political system, free labour market economy and socially stable societies. The relations between the military and its society also include such aspects as the public image and prestige of the armed forces, the societal understanding of their new missions and goals, the trust in their ability to fulfil these goals, and a common awareness of the necessity for them to be reformed. Knowledge of public perceptions of security and defence facilitates recognition as to whether or not a desirable balance between political decision-making and civil society exists. That is why public-opinion polls remain an important analytical tool, not only prior to elections, but also for measuring public support for the various aspects of government policy.

In most countries, the security sector, as well as the armed forces, do not belong to the list of typical topics at the polls, being too marginal, too complex and too far removed from the problems of everyday life. Recent events in security and defence, however, particularly new threats such as international terrorism, and the quest for security solutions in collective defence at both the European and the Euro-Atlantic levels, have triggered a broad debate and, thus, are now also reflected in a significant number of public-opinion polls. Although the public perception of security has not been restricted to the functioning



of state-security institutions, people across Europe have gained awareness of the importance of their effectiveness. The cognition of these new trends in public opinion can provide experts, politicians, donors and security-sector executives with knowledge, which gives them a better understanding of any public reaction to future decisions concerning security issues.

It is no coincidence that this book is published by the Centre for Civil-Military Relation in Belgrade. Experts and researchers from the South-Eastern European countries had contributed substantially to this book, despite difficulties with the relevant data collection and the need to treat them with caution and in-depth knowledge. This book represents the third volume of DCAF-CCMR 'blue' series, and thus constitutes a testimony to the excellent co-operation between the two institutions. I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to all those who have contributed to this publication.

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to express my thanks to all the authors of this edited volume for their excellent contributions. In addition, I would also like to thank all those who made the production of this book possible, namely the Director of Geneva DCAF, Ambassador Dr. Theodor Winkler and the then Geneva DCAF Head of Think Tank and present Senior Political Advisor to the DCAF Director, Dr. Andrzej Karkoszka. From the very beginning Dr. Karkoszka has given his support to this project and encouraged me to bring it to a (hopefully successful) close. My gratitude also goes to Lea Biason, Geneva DCAF Research Associate, who assisted in the compilation of this volume. Last but not least, I am indebted to Professor Miroslav Hadžić, the Director of the Centre for Civil-Military Relations in Belgrade, who enthusiastically took on the task of publishing the volume.

The analysis, opinions and conclusions presented in this book are those of the editor and the authors alone, and do not necessarily represent the views of DCAF.

Geneva, January 2003

Marie Vlachová



# **Introduction**

**Andrzej Karkoszka**

Public opinion belongs to a very important area of interest, to which our very young institution attaches great importance, namely, the societal aspects of security policy of states. This area covers all aspects of civil-military relations, strategic community building, the role of civil society in assisting in the democratic control of the security sector's institutions, the role of women in security policy, and problems of communication between state and society on security matters. Understanding these issues is indispensable for a truly democratic security and defence policy, that is, a policy based on widely perceived, and consented to, national-security interests, executed in a transparent and efficient manner under the strictest possible public accountability. Each and every element of this perfunctory "definition" of a democratic security policy, like "wide acceptance", "consented to", "transparent", "publicly accountable" presupposes, as discussed in the introductory chapter by Jan Hartl, a provision for a two-way communication channel between the state authorities and the society, the first acting in defining and implementing the security and defence policy in the name of the nation, the latter being able to express its views in an objectively sound, that is, representative and timely, manner. One of the instruments used by modern democracies in this endeavor to communicate is public-opinion polling and surveying. In the case of the volume presented here by the DCAF we bring forward the results of such polling and surveying on the particularly sensitive and complex subject of security and defence policy of several states, predominantly the new democratic states of Eastern and Southern Europe.

Public surveying is not entirely new for the emerging democracies of Eastern and Southern Europe. However, it is only after the political revolution of 1989, or somewhat later in several cases, when this tool became used more extensively and when the functional relationship, characteristic of democratic systems, between the public opinion and state authorities was established in a more-or-less systematic way. The security and defence policy of each of the states, discussed in this vol-

ume, underwent fundamental – or at least substantial – transformations during the last decade. The analysis, provided by the authors, gives an interesting clarification on the question of how much these new policies – often controversial, costly and/or uncertain as to the results – were supported by wider segments of society.

As the analyses cover the whole decade of the 1990s, the present volume adds to a number of other studies, concentrating solely or predominantly on the various stages of transformation in defence and security matters of the Eastern part of Europe and on various aspects of this specific subject matter, be they doctrinal, legal, or dealing with structural changes. The additional insight on how all these dynamics of reforms (namely, shifts in threat perceptions over time, different stages of transformations, and specific programmes) resonated in the various strata of the general public in the relevant countries constitutes the specific value of the topics provided herein.

First, being young democracies with a wide scope of attitudes and experiences on the role of public opinion in general and, secondly, having drastically different security concerns, the states of Eastern and Southern Europe constitute a very difficult matter for purposes of obtaining a unified assessment and analysis. Some of these countries performed public surveys systematically and used a rich spectrum of different methods, others have a much narrower experience in this field, and some, like Macedonia, are only just beginning to use such tools (relying on sketchy polls provided by foreign agencies). Such an objective situation does not permit the comparison of national data obtained from various sources, from different periods of time, and by specific methods. It will take some time before the more easily comparable instrumentation is applied and more ample data collected on these or other politically essential issues throughout the whole European continent. In order to make up for this perceived deficiency, the volume provides, in the Chapter on “European public opinion and defence policy” by Phillip Manigart, a useful gist of the public attitudes in the 15 members of the European Union on several issues, like those on compulsory military service, on the confidence in the military, on new types of threats, all of which are subjects of analysis in the rest of the book, dealing with the Eastern and Southern European states.

With the exception of the case of Switzerland, very specific and interesting in itself but not very useful as a model for the other cases, the countries under analysis (born out of the East-European realities) fall into three large categories. First, there are states already integrated or soon to be integrated into NATO and living in stable internal and external conditions: a specific case in this category is provided by Ukraine. Secondly, there are states coming out of a recent conflict, with still serious concerns about their internal and external security,

notably those in the Balkans. Thirdly, there is Russia, whose reforms in the areas of security and defence are still in the early stages, and the dimensions of which are substantially different from all other cases. The categorization, proposed here, serves merely as the justification of divergence of security concerns of the particular national public opinions.

Even though not fully comparable in a statistical or analytical sense, the information on the attitudes of the public in the respective countries (attitudes concerning the national security and defence policies, and contained in the different national chapters of the book), is still very useful and interesting. It provides for preliminary and tentative tendencies in the public attitudes on these complex issues, responding to different geopolitical, ethnic, economic, social, and military conditions, elucidated well in the texts of individual chapters. Again, while there is a visible effort on the part of the editor to keep the scope of the analysis within prescribed limits and to keep it focused on a comparable set of issues, the differences in the objective historical and geopolitical circumstances of the states under consideration cannot quite achieve the desired uniformity of analysis. Admittedly, each of the authors strives to cover a similar set of questions, such as public views on potential threats (internal and external), security concerns other than purely military ones, the social position of the armed forces, the pace and direction of reforms in national defence policy, the issue of integration with the European security institutions (particularly on NATO), the tasks and role of armed forces in peace and war, the future of conscription and the possibility of all-volunteer army. However, responding to the particular conditions of the given state under analysis, each of the chapters brings some additional and very specific issues relevant to the public opinion of that state. Also, the proportion between the material concerning the background of national defence reforms (as they were carried out over the last decade) and the actual rendition of public attitudes (illustrating the shifts and stratification of these attitudes over time) varies from chapter to chapter. This lack of homogeneity among different national chapters, though not usually intended, makes each of them stand more on its own rather than conforming to a prescribed model.

The book is addressed less to those scholars concerned with the sociological analysis of societies in transition or to specialists on methods of public polling and surveying. Its main usefulness is for those political practitioners, who design new security and defence policies, and are concerned with the issues of public opinion: how such opinion could and should be used, what the value of public-opinion polling is, and how it could be shaped or how it actually shapes the policies of states. It will also help in the better

understanding of the dynamics of past, present, and future transformations of security and defence policies of the states in Eastern and Southern Europe.





# The Importance of Public Opinion in Security and Defence Policy-Making

Jan Hartl

## THE RISE OF PUBLIC OPINION

To many people, public opinion appears as something obvious, a feature of everyday life, which is so plain and normal that only seldom do people ask themselves what the nature of public opinion is or question its appearance in human history. Perhaps most people would be surprised to learn that public opinion (as an important factor in the social, political and economic life of society) entered the historical scene only some two-hundred years ago. Prior to the end of eighteenth century, only rarely could we observe the coincidence of three factors which were inevitable preconditions for the rise of strong public opinion: 1) the major improvement in general public education, 2) the rise of the middle classes and the resulting mobility of people, 3) the birth of mass communication media. Ancient and medieval societies were fragmented by specific local interests of various groups, without a real need for a widespread set of common values and interests or generally-shared information on general issues. Public opinion became a strong factor during the French Revolution and during the early nineteenth-century United States as described by Alexis de Tocqueville.<sup>1</sup>

Although existent in the nineteenth century, public opinion (in the modern sense of the word) was then still only emerging, growing and gathering its influence over various social, political and economic issues and topics. We can observe it in systems of both formal and informal social control and in the attempts to fight poverty and improve the well-being of working classes. The public, as a collection of people interested in the same issues and in communicating about such issues, became more and more involved in the political life – mainly in the United States, where the first newspaper enquettes during presidential electoral campaigns appeared as early as 1824. We should mention that, in the rest of the world, the progress of public opinion was rather slow, although closely observed by social scientists (J.

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<sup>1</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York, Knopf, 1835).

Bryce, F. Tönnies).<sup>2</sup> We had to wait till World War I to see further substantial development.

World War I showed that the modern world was mutually interconnected, dependent on the mass media. The actions of people were the results of mediated interpretations, depended on stereotypes, and "pictures in people's heads". Public opinion was becoming an important and even dominant factor in social development, as noticed by Walter Lippmann soon after the war (Lippmann, 1922).<sup>3</sup> By the end of the War, there were important discoveries in social psychology, both in the theory and in the empirical research. The theory of attitudes contributed to our understanding of the motivation of people and of the anatomy of opinion (opinion as verbalized, mainly cognitive component of an attitude). The late twenties also brought about the sophisticated instruments of measurement of attitudes – attitudinal scales (Bogardus, 1926, Thurstone 1929).<sup>4</sup> By the end of the twenties, the new methods of measurement of peoples' attitudes earned general scientific recognition, further contributing to an earlier process of quantification in social sciences based on representative sampling (Arthur Bowley, 1916).<sup>5</sup> Use and misuse of public opinion became primary topics of authors interested in propaganda, publicity and public relations since the late twenties.<sup>6</sup> From today's perspective, it must have been a real breakthrough to realize that, to a large extent, the important events were neither results of objective laws of development, nor the expressions of ideas but, rather, the results of activities based on imperfect, erratic interpretations of laymen, uninterested and uninformed publics and manipulated masses.

In the thirties, the practical relevance of public opinion marked the road to market research and to general-public opinion research. Public-opinion research achieved a dramatic success in George Gallup's prediction of the 1936 US presidential election. Gallup gave a great publicity to the fact that, by use of a relatively modest representative sample, one could predict the behaviour of people within an acceptable margin of error. Public-opinion research spread all over the United States by the end of the thirties and, by the end of forties, it spread also all over Europe. Systematic study of public opinion led to

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<sup>2</sup> James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*, New York, Macmillan, 1899).

Ferdinand Toennies, *Kritik der Oeffentliche Meinung* (Berlin, J. Springer 1922).

<sup>3</sup> Walter Lippman, *Public Opinion* (New York, Macmillan, 1922).

<sup>4</sup> E.S. Bogardus, 'Measuring Social Distance', *Journal of Applied Sociology IX*, (1925): 299/308.

L. L. Thurstone and E. J. Chave, *The Measurement of Attitudes* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1929).

<sup>5</sup> Arthur Bowley, *Livelihood and Poverty* (London, 1916).

<sup>6</sup> Edward L. Bernays, *Public Relations*, New York, 1952.

the refinement of research procedures and techniques. Public opinion was aimed not only at the description of the state of public opinion, but also at a deeper understanding of values, attitudes and beliefs of people. Scholars began to study not only the direction of opinion, but also its intensity, stability, consistency and various other aspects of public consciousness.

## PUBLIC OPINION AND DEFENCE POLICY

It was World War I which confronted social scientists, journalists and politicians with the new phenomena of mass society and mass propaganda. Attempts to influence public opinion during the war pointed, on the one hand, to the volatility and vulnerability of public opinion; while, on the other hand, it also revealed how little we knew about the processes of formation, expression and measurement of public opinion. But it was not only World War I: the study and application of knowledge on public opinion became crucially important during World War II and also during the Cold War. If we review all topics and issues studied by the Gallup Institute since 1936, we can see that war and defence-related topics were of primary importance. Outstanding scholars, such as Hadley Cantril,<sup>7</sup> helped President Roosevelt in understanding and influencing American public opinion concerning the entry of the US into the war.

From today's perspective, we may say that public opinion is present and relevant almost everywhere. But it is not so obvious that, historically, in its early stages of development, public opinion was closely connected to issues of war and peace, to the selection between various defence and security measures.

In the second half of the twentieth century, the interest in public opinion (as well as the empirical study of public opinion) spread enormously all over the world. Public opinion and its study were perceived as tools for enhancing democracy, promoting open society, improving communication among people, understanding their motivation – thus targeting social provisions and other legislative matters in a coherent, consistent and effective way. It was no mere coincidence that Communists in Central and Eastern Europe (after they seized power in the late forties) closed down newly-established institutes for public opinion research and found no use even for the notion of public opinion. No wonder – public opinion implies plurality and diversity, whereas Communists insisted on the dominant role of only one segment of society, namely the working class led by its avant-garde, the Communist Party. Re-introduction of public opinion and public-opinion research had to wait until the sixties in the majority of CEE countries (e.g. in Czechoslovakia until 1967, abolished again after the Russian invasion of 1968).

Meanwhile, in the Western world, public opinion was more and more visible as a constituent part of the political process. Since 1960, political campaigns were relying heavily on the study of public opinion and mass persuasion. The skills of political marketing were further elaborated in the second half of the seventies as a response to the need to cope with the prevalent volatile voter, whose political alignment was weak and fragile, his support fluctuating, conditional and based on irrational factors. Abundant use of electoral polling since the eighties (not only in the United States but also in many countries of Western Europe) resulted in a popular perception that public opinion is important mainly around elections – and that the study of public opinion consists in a more or less accurate prediction of electoral results. Not so many people noticed that, since the eighties, public-opinion data was more and more frequently used in mass media communication as a tool of infotainment, a peculiar mixture pretending to offer information while actually delivering entertainment. Summing up – in many aspects, it seems that these days public opinion is treated by mass media and by politicians as an important issue, but not a serious one. According to them, it is necessary to study public opinion instrumentally as a precondition of general orientation in the society and also as a precondition of success in the mass media. Through this perception, public opinion remains floating on the surface of events, does not reflect real depth of life, and has only a limited substantial meaning in itself.

How can public opinion be linked to issues of defence and security? Simply – in a similar way to that in the past. Dramatic events of World War I and World War II, or of the Cuban Crisis, pointed to the fact that a large part of defence and security solutions is political in its substantial meaning. Security and defence solutions required the art of creating a broad consensus nationwide. They showed that, under certain circumstances, the interpretations (and misinterpretations) played a more important role than objective facts. Apparently, professional and technological solutions are necessary preconditions to security and defence. Still, they are only instrumental, being just one step in the process: perception – policy conception – decision – implementation – professional evaluation – public-opinion feedback.

Our world today is much more interconnected and interdependent than it was fifty years ago: it is globalized in the positive sense of the word. But it is also more complicated and diversified. Let us not have illusions – so influential in the past – that security and defence can be the result of mainly technological solutions or of mainly institutional solutions. In a globalized world, things are not so clear-cut as in the past nation-states. Various aspects of security, war and peace, possible threats of terrorism, mass migration, and sustainable development are more complex in a globalized world. We need to understand the com-

plexity of this world, we need to learn how people perceive these issues, how we can communicate facts and meanings, how we can contribute to a learning process, how we can cope with conflicts of interest. To put it succinctly – we need to study public opinion on defence and security in a much deeper, consistent, systematic and comparative way.

## FEELING OF SECURITY

Security and safety form part of basic human needs. During the course of their lives, people first seek safety and security within the family, later on within their relations through kinship, then the local community and region, and finally within the national state. In the modern world, the need for security is extended internationally and globally. It might seem simplistic to say that, as a baby, one initially seeks security within the family and that, only later, while growing up, people increasingly appreciate the broader societal, international and global framework of security. In fact, this assumed learning process is contradictory. The security within the family might be threatened by the community, by the state, or internationally. Similarly, the community or the region could be threatened by the state, or through conflicts between states, etc.

The actual situation is even more complicated. Feelings of security are derived from value structures of the personality; they are based on social and cultural traditions. The process of modernization and, generally, the process of societal change caused by the breakdown in traditional values, norms and habits, creates among large groups of people feelings of uncertainty, ambiguity and insecurity. Different cultural systems are sensitive to such changes in different ways. Some systems seem to be more particularistic, other more universalistic; some societies or cultural identities are more open to change, others less so, some are tolerant, while some are not. What applies to states and cultures, applies even more to various groups and individuals. After 11 September 2001, these contexts have been widely discussed as possible sources of terrorism. The boundaries between external and internal security do not apply in the way they did in the past, risks and threats range from individuals to minorities (be they ethnic or religious), various interest groups, regions, nations and states, right up to the international/global system.

Feelings of security and safety are not only defined by their social and traditional contexts. From the point of view of social psychology, we should acknowledge the fact that they are relatively firmly and deeply rooted in the structure of personality in the form of attitudes. Attitudes toward security have their cognitive, rational component as well as their affective, emotional (irrational) component; they may

result in actions, or remain inactive and passive. Opinion as a verbalized attitude reflects mainly the rational component of security, whereas emotional and active components remain largely beyond observation. It is certainly very important that we should study and measure opinion, that we should learn and understand at least part of the feeling of security. Still, we should be aware of the fact that we refrain from irrational feelings of insecurity, and from irrational threats, simply because we do not possess adequate tools for their study. This difficulty can be overcome only partially and only indirectly, through multivariate analyses pointing to inconsistencies, interconnections, interactions, contexts, etc.

Empirical evidence on the feelings of security shows that certain aspects of security may be perceived (and studied) as values, which are relatively constant and stable, possibly derived from culture and historical tradition. If we take them as indicators of the feeling of security, we obtain the basis for comparison between the various groups of the population, which shows internal diversification. We can study values through international comparisons, which show external and trans-cultural diversification. In a given time and societal context, these indicators – for the very reason that they remain relatively constant in time – show the general mood of the population. Certain aspects of the feeling of security may be perceived (and studied) as attitudes. Attitudes are relatively resistant to change, they partially reflect deep motivational factors of the personality and, partly, they also reflect situational factors. These attitudes are the primary target of seriously conceived long-term communicational efforts and campaigns. To study attitudes towards security, means to search for adequate tools of measurement – be it simple indicators or complicated scales/scores constructed in various ways. Finally, certain aspects of security are studied as beliefs, as situational reflections of various events. Such indicators are a suitable subject to regular monitoring; they serve for general orientation and for directing short-term communication efforts. When calling for the need of a deeper, consistent, systematic and comparative public-opinion study on security, we have to take into account all three levels of analysis – deeply rooted values, semi-stable attitudes, and situationally- and contextually-defined views and beliefs. In addition, we should at least attempt to address the issue of irrational factors.

## INSTITUTIONAL DEFENCE AND SECURITY

Up till now we treated – for the sake of clarity – the issue of security and defence merely as a simple object-subject relation. We pointed to the fact that any definition/measure/provision of security cannot be an objective one but, instead, it is the result of a process of

subjective interpretation/reinterpretation. What is of crucial importance, however, is the fact that issues of security and defence reach far beyond the immediate experience of individuals and groups, but require complex institutional mediation. Every day, when listening to the news, people learn of various steps taken by a variety of institutions, and of those taken by their leaders towards security and defence. It might seem that institutions dominate security and defence, which is difficult to understand for the average man, and this is something which, perhaps, might even alienate people. The need to study public opinion on security and defence points exactly to this mediation role of mass-communication media and specialized security/defence institutions and organizations. To reform the security/defence sectors, means, among other things, to bring institutions back within the reach of people, giving them more transparency and fostering their accountability to the wider public.

Security and defence belong among those primary tasks of governments and international institutions. Security may be achieved by them both through military and non-military tools and methods, through active and passive strategies, through deterrence and incentives. When speaking of security factors, we should not forget non-governmental organizations with a wide range of activities, which may address security issues directly or indirectly. Academics and mass-media people may play important indirect activities in defining and interpreting security issues, too. This institutional background of security and defence broadens the scope for its social analysis. In addition to general perceptions of security as discussed in the previous paragraph (values of security, attitudes towards security), we have to study the opinion on the relevant institutions. These institutions (such as national military force, governments, parliaments, NATO, EU and other integrative bodies) are perceived by public opinion on two levels: on the one hand, people evaluate their practical efforts, efficient action, adequate use of resources and tools; on the other hand, they evaluate their symbolic efforts and the fulfilment of abstract goals, such as their contribution to justice, freedom, the general good and a better future. In their evaluations of security and defence, people are most often dependent on external information and interpretations: on addresses and speeches of their political leaders, on statements of their governments and other institutions, on information and commentaries mediated through TV, radio and newspapers. In the old days, the information and interpretations were often limited by cultural systems, nation-states and the usage of the maternal language. In the modern world, the process has been expanded by the general growth of knowledge of foreign languages, and by new communication technologies which cross all existing frontiers (such as the Internet, satellite TV and other media). In this context of plurality and diversity of

information, the opinion on security is being formed in a complex manner. This opinion depends on several factors:

1. on the strength of traditional norms in the society and the given culture;
2. on the integrity of the normative system across various layers within the society;
3. on the general perception of the main institutions within the society (esteem, trust, image);
4. on the preceding societal or collective experience (e.g. totalitarian or democratic past);
5. on the subjective evaluation of credibility of various sources of information (specific media, specific channels of interpersonal communication);
6. on the personal or group capabilities to integrate contradicting pieces of information into the framework of previous knowledge and experience (ability to cope with cognitive dissonance).

A meaningful study of public opinion on security and defence should consistently address all the six above-mentioned aspects. Such a task is not easy and cannot be achieved in one isolated survey. However, it may be successfully approached through a systematic long-term study: in a series of in-depth analyses, in a series of national and cross-national representative surveys aiming not only at description but, rather, at exploration, comparison and understanding.

## STRUCTURE AND CHANGE

Let us say that we want to know what the feeling of security in a country is, what is perceived as the main threat, what is the expectation for the future, how the military forces are perceived, what is the preferred model of defence and how the government is evaluated for its defence efforts. We carry out a large survey, or a few smaller surveys, on a representative sample of the population, we then process the data, and we finally obtain the results. Nevertheless, how do we know whether the results are positive or negative, whether or not we should be satisfied with the policies? This is not easy to answer. Everyone has an intuitive subjective concept based on normative expectations, previous experience and social conventions. More than 50 per cent "YES" supporting a certain policy may be perceived as a positive result – having in mind the convention that more than 50 per cent represent a majority, as in the case of a referendum. We should be aware of the underlying normative expectations and conventions, and when some people automatically – and without hesitation – know if the result is good or bad, and we should be rather careful and sceptical. Would the result be the same if we phrase the question in a different



way, would it be much different if the options for response were Yes/No/Hard-to-say? We shall touch upon this subject subsequently, when discussing the intensity of opinion.

Even if we skip the problem of questions and responses, we cannot be sure about the interpretation of the findings of the survey unless we explore the structure of opinion (such as the correlation of indicators targeted at various aspects of an opinion) and the differentiation of responses by various social and demographic groups. If, for example, a certain issue polarizes public opinion into two clearly-opposing camps, the “average” or “mean” result does not make much sense – it only indicates that one camp is somewhat stronger in number than the other one. Certainly, we cannot derive the conclusion that the population, in its majority, supports a certain idea or institution unless it is clear that we abstract from internal contradictions. Let us have an example: If we ask the Czech population what is the biggest security threat, we obtain the following majority response: “Russia”. If we explore the differentiation of opinion, we learn that Russia is much more of a threat to the young generation, whereas a large part of the old generation (for whom World War II is still a living memory) perceives Germany to be the main threat. While the first group supports NATO membership, the other opposes NATO. The most relevant target group to be addressed by efforts of explaining defence strategies, however, is the group which feels entrapped between Russia and Germany. If we want to analyse, interpret and communicate these results in a meaningful way, we should rather treat the Czech population as three different sets of opinion.

A classical issue raised long ago by Lord Bryce, George Gallup or Hadley Cantril is the requirement to explore the differentiation of opinion according to previous knowledge. The opinion of experts may be substantially different from the opinion of laymen. The sphere of security and defence is quite often supposed to be limited to the military, to top-level professionals and a section of the political elite. Others – owing to secrets surrounding some issues and provisions – simply do not possess sufficient knowledge. Although such a situation may correctly describe the existing situation, the reform of security and defence policy-making should acknowledge the fact that security and defence are increasingly becoming political issues, which should be supported and understood by the wider public. Security and defence policies can perhaps never be totally transparent in respect of details and specific steps, or main principles, goals, procedures, controls and feedbacks; they should, however, be clear and understandable. Research of opinion on security and defence can help to fulfil these tasks. Opinion research is not only a cognitive but, rather, a communicative tool (we shall come to this issue later). It may help to raise and structure certain issues through media and moderate public

debate; and, if we wish to know the gap between the opinion of those who are “in” and those who are “out”, we may carry out simultaneously surveys among elites, decision makers, the military, attentive and general publics and we can compare them, discover gaps, structural differences and the areas of mutual consensus.

So far, we mentioned the need to study opinion in various sub-populations and target groups. However, we shall never have a sufficient background for an appropriate interpretation of public opinion data unless we can trace the dynamics of the development of opinion. For the sake of this, we need to have a time series of surveys, which are conducted on identical methodological principles, using exactly the same wording and arrangement of questions, based on identical samples of population. If we study general values or general attitudes, it is sufficient to repeat the survey every couple of years. If we study the opinion on issues, which are affected situationally or contextually, we should instead develop some form of regular monitoring at least a few times in a year. Such a study of trends is based usually on a series of representative samples, each of these conducted with different respondents. For short-term comparison, we are better off using a panel of respondents (the same people interviewed repeatedly with the same questions). The panel study is utilized especially when we want to observe the fluctuations of the opinion and decision-making process of the people, usually around an important event (e.g. the war in Kosovo, a NATO summit). Existing empirical evidence shows that the dynamics of the process of public opinion may be practically more important than a thorough study on stratification and segmentation of opinion. If the support for NATO is relatively high but decreasing, it may be a worse situation than the case when support for NATO is relatively low but increasing. In such a case, it is useful to check for internal differentiation, especially for the position of the active part of the population with a higher social status.

## DEEP IN MY HEART – ON INTENSITY OF OPINION

An occasional user of public-opinion data is quite often interested only in the distribution of answers, which shows mainly the direction of an attitude. In such an approach, we can learn, for example, that 75 per cent of people perceive terrorism as the main threat to security. However, what does this 75 per cent mean, besides the fact that it is a large majority? Does it mean that people who express this opinion are deeply convinced of the fact and that they would be willing to take even unpopular steps to help to solve the threat of terrorism, or is it rather a luke-warm expression of something one has heard the previous day on the TV, which has almost no motivational potential for the

person who expresses it? This is the issue of intensity of opinion, which was the central point of interest when Hadley Cantril advised president Roosevelt on the issue of the entry of United States into World War II.

Intensity of opinion for the study of security and defence is still as important as it was 60 years ago, or even more so because of the more complex security and defence situation in the world today. A low-intensity opinion is usually fragile, volatile and vulnerable; it fluctuates in time, quite often unpredictably, driven by circumstances and emotional factors. A high-intensity opinion, on the other hand, is relatively stable and is resistant to sudden changes; quite often, it is the long-term result of a critical approach to the given issue. Not surprisingly, we find a high level of support for the NATO membership in Albania or Romania: most likely, the quality of support is not too intense, quite probably it is based on a very general and abstract ideological concept. A lower level of support for NATO in other countries may be a result of a critical appraisal of the membership, and yet, in terms of quality, it might be a more valuable result than the former one, especially when planning programmes and strategies for the long term, requiring stable support from the public.

The issue of intensity of an attitude may substantially affect proper interpretation of the results of public-opinion surveys. The neglect of the intensity issue may, in certain situations, open the door to manipulation and misuse of research findings. Let us be brief and illustrate it on an example. The attitudes towards NATO around the mid-nineties in the Czech Republic were mainly ideological. People did not know much about NATO and, on the whole, they perceived NATO as a rather abstract symbol of the Western World to which they wanted or did not want to belong. Their opinion on NATO was of low intensity, it had almost no real content based on a subjective balance of positive and negative aspects of membership, which might have been derived from a critical confrontation of the diversity of information and various pieces of knowledge. Under such circumstances, it was not easy to say what proportion of people supported NATO, because the result was very sensitive to the details of the actual wording of the question and on the extent and wording of the responses. With a small amount of methodological experimentation, we could, at that “low-intensity” moment, find indicators showing less than 30 per cent support for NATO, and we could, at the same time, find other indicators showing 40, 50 or even more than sixty per cent support. In such a situation, one does not have to manipulate the data – it is sufficient just to select the right indicator for illustrating the plausible preconceived result. Later on, after the Madrid meeting and the war in Kosovo, people obtained more information, gathered their primary experience, and gave more thought to our NATO membership. The

attitude towards NATO became more intense and the results measured by various indicators became similar, showing no great variance. Such an example illustrates that the intensity of public attitudes really matters.

## COMMUNICATING SECURITY AND DEFENCE

The reform of security and defence policy-making should acknowledge the fact that, in the present globalized world, the security is mainly a political issue in the broadest sense of the word. The security system is not only an interlinked set of power elites, military forces, specialized institutions, organizational principles, material resources, logistical support and other professional aspects, but, to an increasingly-growing extent, it entails various non-governmental and non-military organizations, groups of academics and journalists forming a larger security community, attentive also to the general public. If the security system in the democratic world is not to lose strength, efficiency and capability for action, it has to be properly coordinated, and controlled, and it has to seek political support through systems of political representation and through public opinion. To do so, means to find effective ways of public communication. Certainly, we shall continue to need secret services; apparently much of the strategic information will remain secret. More transparency is, however, needed where it does not directly endanger the crucial elements of the security system. It might help the public to understand the principles of security and defence policy, it might help to intensify their opinion, and it might help to stabilize the political scene. More transparency means also the challenge to acquire new communication skills by existing security and defence structures; it also means new channels of public control.

To communicate more openly on security and defence matters is not an easy task. Not only the security elites, but also the public, must learn how to deal with security and defence in the area of public debate. They have to overcome the tendency to close the system whenever a problem appears. They have to cope with stereotypes, prejudices and with routinized rigid bureaucratic practices. Public-opinion research and in-depth sociological analyses may support such attempts. These studies may serve not only as a source of knowledge; they may also be powerful communication tools. In a democratic society under normal conditions, it is difficult to open the public debate on a chosen issue in a chosen time. The media have to report on facts and events. Public-opinion research findings may represent such a fact; they may provoke commentaries and replies. The flow of information may be deliberately structured in such a way that would facilitate understanding of certain issues and topics. It may be used to calm down

the situation, as well as to express the acute need for unpopular security measures.

Public opinion should increasingly play an important role in security and defence policy-making in the contemporary world. To do so effectively and meaningfully, we need to understand public opinion on these issues in a more consistent way. We need long-term public-opinion monitoring of security threats and relevant “security events”, such as, for example, local conflicts. We ought to test the feasibility of various security and defence steps and measures, and we should test the subjective acceptability of various arguments. We must understand values, norms and cultural traditions, which direct public opinion. To be able to do that, we must study trans-cultural differences in international comparative surveys. Finally, we need to develop effective communication strategy on security and defence policies. Focusing on communication strategy, the analysis of public opinion serves three goals: it is the prerequisite to such a strategy, it is an important component of such a strategy, and it forms a feedback which is necessary to control and further develop the strategy as a systematic meaningful effort.



# European Public Opinion of Defence Policy

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## INTRODUCTION

From a normative standpoint, it is important that, in a democratic political system, the gap between political decisions and the attitudes and preferences of the public be as small as possible. This is equally true for security and defence policy: a credible security and defence policy, be it national or supra-national, requires not only the capacity to organise and maintain the military means to defend one self, but also some degree of acceptance of these measures by the public.

As Russell J. Dalton notes,<sup>7</sup> public perception generally defines acceptable limits within which the political elite must resolve various political problems. Naturally, as political scientist V.O. Key, Jr.<sup>8</sup> had already emphasised, "*In some instances opinion may be permissive but not the directive of a specific action. In others opinion may be, if not directive of specific action, virtually determinative of particular acts*". While political leaders probably had more room for manoeuvre in the

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<sup>7</sup> Russell J. Dalton, *Citizen Politics in Western Democracies: Public Opinion and Political Parties in the United States, Great Britain, West Germany, and France* (Chatham: Chatham House Publishers, 1988), p.2.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Carroll J. Glynn, Susan Herbst, Britt J. O'Keeffe, and Robert Y SHAPIRO, *Public Opinion* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), p. 306.

area of defence during the Cold War<sup>9</sup>, in the post-Cold War period, the media and public opinion have become the actors to be taken into consideration in this area as well, in particular during crisis situations as in the examples of the former Yugoslavia and Kosovo in particular clearly show.<sup>10</sup>

In this context, it is therefore particularly important to analyse the opinions of the public towards security and defence policy, in particular at a time when both NATO and the European Union (EU) have embarked on an institutional journey aimed at trying to adapt their structures to this radically new geostrategic, political, economic and cultural environment.

The aim of this paper is to present a comparative analysis of questions dealing with security and defence policy which were recently asked in the Eurobarometer surveys carried out on behalf of the European Commission in the 15 EU countries. More particularly, it will use some of the results of the first large-scale comparative survey on the topic of European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) ever carried out in the 15 Member States of the European Union. The survey was commissioned by the Belgian Defence Minister, André Flahaut, in the Autumn of 2000, in the light of the impending Belgian EU Presidency. To this end, and, with the consent of the European Commission, eight questions on this subject were inserted into the Eurobarometer survey wave 54.1 of autumn 2000. These questions may be grouped under three main themes:

1. A few contextual variables that, at the level of public opinion in the member states, may influence the debate in this area (fears, roles assigned to the army, confidence in institutions in general and the army in particular).
2. The way in which a common security and defence policy should be organised (support, level, and modes of decision-making).
3. The establishment of a European army (roles and form).

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<sup>9</sup> See Stein Rokkan "Citizen participation in political life", *International Social Science Journal* 12 (1960): 7-99 and Philippe Manigart, "Les relations interorganisationnelles dans le domaine de la défense nationale", *Courrier Hebdomadaire du CRISP*, (1111-1112, 1986).

<sup>10</sup> See, among others, Philip Everts and Pierangelo Isernia (eds), *Public Opinion and the International Use of Force* (London: Routledge, 2001); Mary McIntosh, "Testing the Structure of European Foreign Policy Opinion: Attitudes Toward NATO, Engagement in Bosnia and European Integration", paper presented at the Certosa Di Pontignano International Seminar on "Public Opinion, Democracy and Security Policy", October 7-10, 1996; Martin Shaw, *Post-Military Society: Militarism, Demilitarization and War at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991) and *Civil Society and Media in Global Crises: Representing Distant Violence* (London: Pinter, 1996); Richard Sinnott, "European public opinion and security policy," Chaillot papers n° 28 (1997).



This paper will analyse some of these questions. More detailed analyses can be found in the final technical report on *Europeans and a Common Security and Defense Policy*.<sup>11</sup> In the Autumn of 2001, in the context of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the ensuing war in Afghanistan, the European Commission decided to replicate some of the questions, allowing us to study the impact of these dramatic events on European public opinion. In addition, one question on support for the draft that was asked in 1997 will also be commented upon.

## THE DATA

As already mentioned, all the data used in this paper come from the series of Eurobarometer surveys (EB). These are conducted at the request of the European Commission, Directorate-General Press and Communication, Public Opinion sector at least each Spring and Autumn since the Autumn of 1973. They consist of an identical set of questions put to representative probability samples of the population aged 15 and over in each country of the European Union. A total of around 15,900 people are questioned, or about 1,000 people per country, except in Luxembourg (600), in Germany (2,000: 1,000 in the Western part and 1,000 in the Eastern part), and in the United Kingdom (1,300: 1,000 in Great Britain and 300 in Northern Ireland). The use of approximately the same sample design, field periods, and sizes across countries minimises sampling variability and thus ensures a relatively good reliability and comparability, often a problem with trend data analysis.

## RESULTS

### Europeans' Fears

The new geostrategic environment that emerged at the end of the Cold War can be characterised as one of greater complexity and uncertainty compared to the certainties of the bipolar world of the previous decades. There are no longer any clearly identifiable threats, but rather a multitude of risks and dangers. This leads some authors to say that we live in an era of "risk complexity".<sup>12</sup> As a consequence, the perception of these risks and dangers among the public has also

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<sup>11</sup> Philippe Manigart, *Europeans and a Common Security and Defense Policy* (Brussels, Royal Military Academy, technical report, 2001). For the full report, contact [Philippe.Manigart@ssoc.rma.ac.be](mailto:Philippe.Manigart@ssoc.rma.ac.be)

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, Christopher Dandeker, "Flexible forces for the Twenty-First Century." In A. Weibull and C. Dandeker (eds.), *Facing Uncertainty* (Karlstad, Swedish National Defense College, Report no. 1, 1999).

evolved since the end of the Cold War. As an illustration, table 1 presents the kinds of risks Europeans feared the most in the Autumns of 2000 and 2001, i.e. before and after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001.<sup>13</sup>

**Table 1: Fears of Europeans concerning a certain number of threats (% "fear" EU 15)**

	2000	2001
Terrorism	74	86
Spread of NBC weapons	62	79
Organised crime	77	79
Accident in a nuclear power station	75	76
Ethnic conflicts in Europe	65	66
Accidental launch of a nuclear missile	55	65
Epidemics	57	65
World war	45	64
Nuclear conflict in Europe	44	60
Conventional war in Europe	45	56

Sources: EB 54.1 and EB 56

Note: % sorted in descending order (2001)

If the nature of the things Europeans fear is rather diverse (in the Autumn of 2001, all ten items were cited by at least half of them), the first thing, however, that emerges from table 1 is that the threat perception has clearly evolved as a result of 9/11. While in the Autumn of 2000, the number one fear of Europeans was organised crime, in Fall 2001,<sup>14</sup> it was terrorism: 88 % of Europeans said they feared it (against 74 % one year before).<sup>15</sup> On a comparative level, in all 15 European Union countries, the percentages of respondents who said they feared terrorism increased significantly between 2000 and 2001. In the Autumn of 2001, terrorism was considered the number one threat in all countries, except Finland (where organised crime was the most cited), while in the Autumn of 2000, it was top of the list only in Spain, France and the United Kingdom.

Also, Europeans had become systematically more fearful: all percentages were higher in 2001 as compared to 2000, sometimes very

<sup>13</sup> The question was: " Here is a list of things that some people say they are afraid of. For each of these, please tell me if, personally, you are afraid of it, or not ?".

<sup>14</sup> Fieldwork for the survey was carried out between October 13 and November 19, 2001, i.e. one month after the terrorist attacks of September 11 and one week after the beginning of the war in Afghanistan.

<sup>15</sup> The fear of terrorism increased especially among the 15-24 years old (+16 points), who were the ones who feared it the least in 2000.

significantly, as in the case of the fear of terrorism (+ 14 points), of the spread of NBC weapons (+ 17 points), no doubt a reaction explained by the anthrax scare in the United States, or of a war, be it conventional (+ 11 points), nuclear (+ 16 points) or worldwide (+ 19 points). The kinds of wars typical of the Cold War era, although more feared in 2001, are nevertheless all at the bottom of the table.

### **The Roles of the Armed Forces**

Until recently, the threat of an enemy invasion was a real possibility against which countries had to defend themselves. The current situation is rather different. We live, according to Dandeker<sup>16</sup> in an "era of unstable violent peace." The post-Cold War period is, in fact, characterised by the fact that the military threat has become less direct and more vague. Of course, a conventional war has not become completely impossible or unimaginable; even territorial defence remains the ultimate justification for national armed forces. Nonetheless, at least, in the short and medium term, this is no longer the most probable scenario for engagement. For one thing, inter-state wars are gradually tending to be replaced by intra-state conflicts in which national borders no longer play a central role. Ethnic conflicts and the terrorist threat, but also the threat posed by the new Mafias, will probably become the typical examples of post-modern conflicts, conflicts for which traditional military organisations are rather poorly prepared.<sup>17</sup> For another, the defence of basic democratic values and human rights is, increasingly, an aspect of "security" as we conceive it.

Given this multitude of risks and dangers and with a broader definition of security, but, in the absence of a clearly identified threat, the question arises concerning the role and mission of armed forces. What could these roles be, in the view of the Europeans? This was the subject of the question asked in the Eurobarometer Special Defence of Autumn 2000. Table 2 presents the results at EU level.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Christopher Dandeker, "International Security and Its Impact on National Defense Roles." In Bernard Boëne et al, *Facing Uncertainty: The Swedish Military in International Perspective*. (Karlstad, Swedish National Defense College, 2000), pp. 108.

<sup>17</sup> Mary Kaldor calls these new types of conflicts the "new wars" as distinguished from the "old wars" (between states). See Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

<sup>18</sup> The question was: "For each of the following, please tell me if you think it is one of the roles of the army, or not?"

**Table 2: Opinions of Europeans about the Roles of the Military (% "yes" EU15, 2000)**

<b>Roles</b>	<b>% EU15</b>
Defending the country/the territory	94
Helping our country in the event of a disaster	91
Helping other countries in the event of a disaster	84
Keeping or re-establishing peace in the world	80
Preparing for wars and fighting	76
Defending values, such as freedom and democracy	70
Guaranteeing/symbolising national unity	59
Passing on to young people values such as discipline, respect for their superiors	54
Helping young people to integrate into society e.g. by teaching them a trade	54
The army is of no use (SPONTANEOUS)	6

Source: EB 54.1

As one can see, defence of the country remains the role most frequently cited by respondents (94 %). However, immediately following, cited by 91 % of respondents, came a non-military role, of specific help to the country in the case of disaster (natural, ecological, or nuclear). Aid to other countries (in the case of natural, ecological, or nuclear or famine disaster, or to remove land mines, etc.) was mentioned by more than eight respondents out of ten (84 %). The mission that in recent years has become incontestably the most significant in quantitative terms and which is also typical of post-modern armies, that is, peacekeeping or restoring peace, was, meanwhile, cited by eight out of ten Europeans. Seven out of ten Europeans felt that the defence of values such as freedom and democracy was also a role for the military. We note that more traditional, albeit non-military, roles for the armed forces, such as guaranteeing/symbolising national unity, instilling certain values in young people, or helping them integrate into society (the army as the school of the nation) were cited much less frequently (although the percentages remained above 50 per cent). Finally, we must point out that 6 % of those questioned replied spontaneously that the military serves no purpose.

Except in Spain and Luxembourg, defence of the country led the list of roles mentioned, with percentages of more than 90. It was followed by help to the nation in the case of disaster. In Spain and Luxembourg, aid to the country and to other countries ranked first and second. The United Kingdom was the only country of the 15 where the traditional function of the military, specifically preparing for and waging war, came in second with 93 %. It was, moreover, the only country, along with Greece, where the percentage was over 90. Preparing for and waging war was cited particularly infrequently in Swe-

den (38 %), Luxembourg (41 %), and Austria (52 %), where this role came in last. We should note that two of these countries (Sweden and Austria) had a policy of neutrality during the Cold War (in fact, as concerns Sweden, for much longer, nearly 200 years, that is, since the end of the Napoleonic Wars) and that the size of Luxembourg's Army prevents it from envisioning this type of role.

As concerns the post-modern role, par excellence, of armed forces, specifically that of peacekeeping and restoring peace, the percentage of respondents citing this role varied between 60 % in Austria and 89 % in Greece and Ireland. In all countries, the army's roles of socialisation and integration were mentioned least frequently, along with the role of that as a symbol of national unity. The older one is, the more one tends to cite the traditional non military functions of armed forces (school of the nation and as a symbol of national unity), but also the role of defending values such as freedom and democracy.

### **Confidence in the Military**

According to Burk and Moskos,<sup>19</sup> in our post-modern societies, the public's attitudes towards its armed forces are characterised by scepticism and/or apathy. People in fact no longer consider defence a priority. In Eurobarometer surveys, for example, education, health, the fight against crime, efforts to reduce unemployment, etc. are all considered much more important objectives.<sup>20</sup> The reason is to be found in the fact that with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the West lost its main enemy. As we have seen, the risk has become diffuse, and therefore less visible. Humanitarian and peacekeeping missions, by their very nature, are also less spectacular than a conventional conflict. The consequence is that, all things being equal, the military becomes less visible (the elimination of compulsory military service further reinforces this trend) and less central in people's opinion.

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<sup>19</sup> James Burk and Charles C. Moskos, "The Postmodern Military." In J. Burk (ed.), *The Military in New Times: Adopting Armed Forces to a Turbulent World* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), pp. 141-162

<sup>20</sup> See Philippe Manigart, "Belgian Public Opinion and Defense Policy," *Courrier Hebdomadaire du CRISP*, no. 1595.

Other authors,<sup>21</sup> in contrast, are of the opinion that with the re-orientation of post-modern armies' missions towards peacekeeping and humanitarian aid, their popularity tends rather to be higher than during the Cold War. Peacekeeping operations, most often implemented to guarantee stability and help populations in distress, are regarded by public opinion as noble causes, although over the long term, this type of operation may become more difficult to justify, particularly if it involves casualties and/or has a less than clearly defined mandate.

**Table 3: Confidence in the military, 1997-2001**  
(% "tend to trust" by country)<sup>22</sup>

<b>Year</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>DK</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>GR</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>IRL</b>	<b>I</b>
1997	33	74	60	85	56	54	83	55
1999	43	73	61	86	57	56	74	57
2000	67	82	66	87	65	68	85	67
2001/1	51	75	61	86	55	59	77	63
2001/2	62	83	67	88	63	66	78	67
<b>Year</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>NL</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>FIN</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>EU 15</b>
1997	61	53	59	58	88	64	74	61
1999	61	68	49	66	85	57	74	63
2000	74	74	49	78	91	72	83	71
2001/1	62	58	65	73	86	61	72	63
2001/2	65	67	70	77	89	71	82	70

Sources: EB 48, 51, 54.1, 55 (DK included)

Table 3 shows the evolution of trust in the military in the 15 EU countries since 1997, the first year this question was asked in the

<sup>21</sup> See Bernard Boëne and Christopher Dandeker, "Armed forces, state and society in Sweden: a view from a wider European perspective." In Bernard Boëne et al, *Facing Uncertainty: The Swedish Military in International Perspective*. (Karlstad, Swedish National Defense College, 2000) pp. 129-179; Philippe Manigart and Eric Marlier, "New Roles and Missions, Army Image and Recruitment Prospects: The Case of Belgium." In Philippe Manigart (ed.), *Future Roles, Missions and Structures of Armed Forces in the New World Order: The Public View* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 1996) pp. 7-26; and Jan Van der Meulen, "Armed Forces in Post-Modern Societies: The Complexity of Civil-Military Trends." In B. Boene et al, *Facing Uncertainty*, op. cit, pp. 41-58.

<sup>22</sup> The abbreviations used in the following tables are the ones officially in use in the EB reports: B (Belgium), DK (Denmark), D (Germany), GR (Greece), E (Spain), F (France), IRL (Ireland), I (Italy), L (Luxembourg), NL (The Netherlands), A (Austria), P (Portugal), FIN (Finland), S (Sweden), UK (United Kingdom), EU 15 (European Union).

Eurobarometer surveys.<sup>23</sup> These data tend to support, rather, the second hypothesis, i.e. an increase in popularity: as one can see indeed, in Autumn 2001, in all 15 countries, the rate of trust was above 60 %. It was lowest in Belgium (62 %) and highest in Finland (89 %). The level of trust was also well above the EU average in Greece (88 %), Denmark (83 %) and the United Kingdom (82 %).

Between 1997 and 2001, confidence in the military increased, sometimes considerably, in all the countries, with the exception of Greece and Finland, the two countries where confidence had been highest since 1997. It was in Belgium that the increase was the most spectacular (+29 points since 1997).

At European Union level, trust in the military tends to increase with age (as does trust in all the institutions mentioned) and is sharply higher among those 55 years and over (76 % in Autumn 2001) than among people 15 to 39 (67 %) and 40 to 54 (70 %). The more educated the people, the less trust they tend to have in the military (and other institutions): the level drops from 74 % in 2001 among those who had left school before 15 to 66 % among those who had completed their studies after the age of 20.

Interestingly enough, in Autumn 2001 as in 2000, the military, among the 16 institutions concerning which respondents were asked to give an opinion, was the one in which they had the most confidence, which again would rather tend to support our second hypothesis. Seven Europeans out of ten (70 % in 2001) claimed to tend to trust the military. Another institution, the one responsible not for external but for internal security, i.e. that of the police, came in second place with 67 % having faith in it. Then came TV (62 %, up from 54 % in 2000) and radio (62 %, up from 55 % in 2000). At the bottom of the scale, we find political parties (18 %), large companies (33 %), and the unions (33 %).

### **The End of Draft**

As a result of the general social-cultural evolution in Western postindustrial societies (those of individualism and postmaterialist values) and the mission change of post-modern military organisations (from territorial defence and deterrence to constabulary), the draft has seen its legitimacy decrease and, in countries such as Belgium, The Netherlands, and France, even totally disappear.

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<sup>23</sup> The question was: " Now, I would like to ask you about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it, or tend not to trust it ?" Among the 16 institutions proposed was "The military".

A question put to a representative sample of young Europeans aged between 15 and 24 in a special Eurobarometer survey,<sup>24</sup> carried out in Spring 1997, provides an indirect indicator of this growing unpopularity. The question dealt with compulsory military service. Did they think that young people their age would be rather for or against this institution ?<sup>25</sup>

**Table 4: % of young Europeans who believe that young people of their age are in favour of compulsory military service, by country, 1997**

Country	%	Country	%
NL	9	A	30
L	10	D	34
IRL	12	P	35
E	13	DK	39
B	15	S	40
F	17	FIN	52
I	17	GR	79
UK	18	<b>EU 15</b>	<b>23</b>

Source: EB 47.2

Note: % in ascending order

As table 4 shows, in 1997, compulsory military service was very unappealing to young Europeans: only 23 % of them thought that young people of their age were somewhat in favour of compulsory military service. Very significantly, when the survey was replicated in Spring 2001, the item on military service had been dropped from the list, no doubt because it had lost its relevance. The debate over the draft is over and the answer from the public is loud and clear: it belongs to the past.

On a comparative level, it was where compulsory military service did not exist any more and in these countries where the issue was debated that the percentages of respondents who thought that young people their age would be in favour of its continued existence were the lowest. Among the 15 EU countries, it was in the Netherlands that military service was the least appealing (9 %). There was also very strong opposition in Luxembourg (10 % in favour), Ireland (12 %),

<sup>24</sup> EB 47.2. The oversampling size 7059 for the 15 EU countries. This survey was carried out for the former Directorate General XXII of the European Commission.

<sup>25</sup> The question was: "Please tell me whether you think that young people of your age tend to be in favour of or against each of the following ?" Among the 11 items proposed was "Compulsory military service". The question was asked only to young people over age of majority.



Spain (13 %), France (17 %), Italy (17 %) and Great Britain (18 %).<sup>26</sup> On the contrary, it was in Greece and, to a lesser extent, in Finland, two countries which have (or had) difficulties with their neighbours that military service seemed the most acceptable among young people: 79 % and 52 % of respondents respectively thought that young people their age were in favour of compulsory military service.

## EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

The British-French summit of 1 December 1998 in Saint-Malo and, later, the Kosovo conflict opened the way to the decision of the Cologne European Council of 3-4 June 1999 to develop the "*capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises without prejudice to actions by NATO*."<sup>27</sup> In order to realise this objective, the Helsinki European Council of 10-11 December 1999 decided on the establishment of a rapid reaction force of 50-60,000 men by 2003, capable of being deployed within 60 days for a period of at least a year for so-called Petersberg missions, i.e. humanitarian and evacuation missions, peacekeeping, and restoring peace missions. Concretely, however, ESDP is difficult to realise because, among others, as one will see in this section, the opinions of the 15 member States on the missions of such a force and the definition of a European defence identity remain far apart.

So, what do Europeans think of the common European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) ? To what extent do they share the objective of greater integration in this area ? To answer these questions, responses to three questions of the Eurobarometer series will be used. The first one deals with the level at which decisions should be taken concerning European defence policy; the second measures support for the idea of a European Security and Defence Policy and the third, asked only in 2001, assesses the degree of support for the decision to create a European rapid reaction force (RRF) of 50-60,000 men by 2003.

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<sup>26</sup> In Belgium,, France, Great Britain, Ireland, Luxemburg, and The Netherlands, there is no compulsory military service anymore. In Spain and Italy, the debate on its suppression or its reform is on the agenda.

<sup>27</sup> Cited in Maartje Rutten, "*From St-Malo to Nice. European Defense: Core Documents*". Chaillot Papers n° 47 (2001)

## Level of Decision-Making on European Defence Policy

**Table 5: Opinions of Europeans on the level of decision making when it comes to defence, 2000-2001 (% "yes" EU 15)**

Institution	2000	2001
The European Union	43	42
National governments	24	24
NATO	17	20
Other (spontaneous)	1	1
DK	15	14

Sources: EB54.1 and EB56

As one can see from table 5, in Autumn 2001 as in 2000, more than four Europeans in ten (43 % and 42 % respectively) were of the opinion that decisions concerning European defence policy should be taken by the European Union.<sup>28</sup> Only 20 % (17 % in 2000) thought it should be NATO and 24 % the national governments.

In 1989, that is to say at the end of the Cold War but at a time when the USSR still existed, a similar question (but formulated in other terms) had been asked within the framework of Eurobarometer 32 by the *U.S. Information Agency*.<sup>29</sup> The institutions included, however, were not the same: on the one hand, among the possible choices there was the Western European Union; on the other hand, national governments were not explicitly mentioned (but were included as "spontaneous").<sup>30</sup> Any rigorous comparison seems therefore rather difficult to make. Nevertheless, despite these differences, it is interesting to note that the percentage of respondents choosing NATO has significantly decreased: in 1989, NATO was cited by 30 % of Europeans (as against only 20 % now); inversely, the percentage of Europeans choosing the EU has increased (from 36 % in 1989 to 42 % in 2001).

In 10 countries out of 15, the EU was the most often cited institution in 2001. It was the Greeks who believed in by far the greatest number, (65 % in 2001; up 13 points compared to 2000), that decisions concerning European defence policy should be taken by the EU.

<sup>28</sup> The question was "In your opinion, should decisions concerning European defence policy be taken by national governments, by NATO, or by the European Union ?" (Only one response was allowed).

<sup>29</sup> See Philippe Manigart and Eric Marlier, "European Public Opinion on the Future of Its Security," *Armed Forces and Society*, vol. 19, no. 3. (1993): 335-522.

<sup>30</sup> The question was: "In your opinion, should NATO continue to be the most important forum for making decisions about the security of Western Europe in the future, or should the European Community make these decisions, or should some other organisation make these decisions ?"

They were followed by the Italians (60 %) and the Luxembourgers (53 %). In France, support for the EU dropped seven points between 2000 and 2001. Only in Denmark did NATO take first place (39 % in 2001). In Ireland, the UK, Austria and Finland, the national governments were the most often cited institutions, with respectively 45 % (up 9 points since 2000), 30 % (no change), 41 % (up 5 points) and 52 % (up 10 points).

At EU level, it is notable that the percentage of respondents who believed that decisions on defence should be taken by the EU increases with the level of education: in Autumn 2001, it rises from 36 % among those who ended their education before the age of 15 to 51 % among those who had studied up to the age of 20 or more. Conversely, the less educated people are, the more they choose national government (from 20 % among those who studied up to the age of 20 or more to 25 % among those who had left school before the age of 15). People regarded as opinion leaders<sup>31</sup> are clearly greater in number than others in believing that the appropriate level of decision-making should be the EU.

### **Decision-making Mechanism in the Event of Military Intervention**

The previous question concerned the desired level for decisions on European defence policy. The next question starts from the hypothesis that a common European Security and Defence Policy has been instituted. Let us suppose that a decision in principle is being taken to send troops within the framework of a crisis outside the EU. In that case, who should make the decision ?

**Table 6: Opinions of Europeans on the way decisions should  
be made when it comes to military intervention (% EU15)**

Decision	%
Only by the governments of the countries, which are willing to send troops	47
By unanimous voting, that is all countries have to agree	11
By majority voting, keeping the right for each State not to send troops	17
By majority voting, forcing each state to send troops	7

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<sup>31</sup> The index of opinion leadership is based on respondents' replies to a question about frequency of political discussion and a question about the propensity to persuade others. Opinion leaders are those who "frequently" discuss politics and "often" or "from time to time" try to persuade others.

The question was constructed in such a way as to represent a sort of Likert scale (with four gradations) measuring what one could call a European federalist orientation, or more exactly an orientation in favour of European integration in the defence domain.<sup>32</sup> One goes from a purely national orientation ("only the governments of the countries which are willing to send troops") to a classical "intergovernmental" orientation ("by unanimous voting"), and then, to a more integrated level, i.e. "by majority voting, preserving the right of each member State not to send troops", to finally a more constraining mechanism, i.e. "by majority voting, forcing each member state to send troops".

Nearly one European in two (47%) (table 6) believed that it was up to the governments prepared to send troops to decide. The option which, in the question, represented the most "federalist" solution – namely, a binding majority vote – came last, with just 7 %. In other words, there is still a not inconsiderable gap between the vague desire for a European defence and making such a policy operational.

Excepting Italy, where opinions were fairly evenly divided between the national option and a nonbinding majority vote, the national option won by a wide margin in all the EU countries. This was particularly the case in the UK and in Portugal (58 % each), in Austria (56 %), and in Spain (53 %), where the percentages in favour of a purely national decision exceeded 50 %. Conversely, the most radical option exceeded 10 % in just three countries, all of them members of the Union's founding core -- namely, Italy (13 %), Belgium, and France (12 % each).

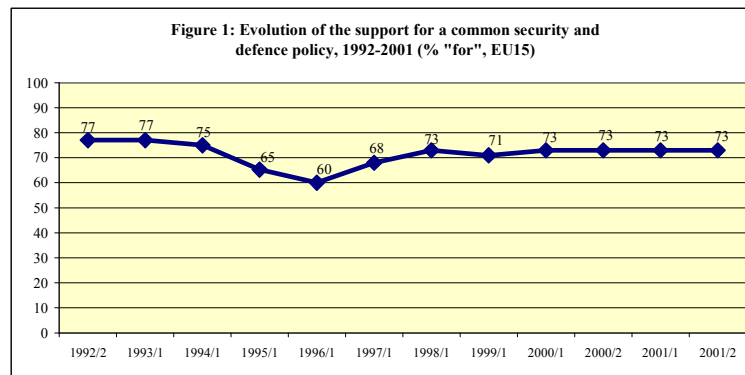
The number of "don't knows" was also relatively very considerable, since it ranged between a minimum of 4 % in Greece (the only country where it was below 10 %) and a maximum of 23 % in Italy. This, undoubtedly, reflects the European decision-making mechanisms' complexity and capacity for many citizens.

#### SUPPORT FOR A COMMON EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY

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<sup>32</sup> For ease of understanding, the question was subdivided into two subquestions: "In the context of a Common European Security and Defence Policy, who, do you think, should take decisions in case of military intervention: only the governments of the countries that are willing to send troops or all member countries of the European Union, including those who are not willing to send troops ?" (If EU) "How should these decisions be made within the European Union?"

Figure 1 shows the evolution of support for a common security and defence policy since Autumn 1992, i.e. the first year in which the question was asked.<sup>33</sup> As one can see, support remains high and with the exception of the period 1995-1997, has always been higher than 70 %. In Autumn 2001, 73 % of Europeans were for a common security and defence policy. In some countries, support is higher now than when the question was first asked. This is the case in Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Ireland and Sweden.



In Autumn 2001, support for a common security and defence policy was highest in Italy (85 %), Belgium (81 %) and Greece (81 %) and lowest in Finland: less than one Finn out of two (48 %) were for the EU member States having one common defence and security policy. Irish (50 %), British (53 %) and Swedish (54 %) respondents were also less favourable than the others to such a policy.

### **The Establishment of a Rapid Reaction Force**

On 3-4 June 1999, the Helsinki European Council, confirming its Cologne positions, decided on the establishment of a rapid reaction force of 50-60,000 men by 2003, capable of being deployed within 60 days and for a period of at least a year. That force should be able to cover the whole spectrum of the so-called Petersberg missions (humanitarian and evacuation missions, peacekeeping, and restoring peace). What do the Europeans think of that decision? This is what they were asked in Autumn 2000 special Eurobarometer on defence. Table 7 shows the results by country.

<sup>33</sup> The question wording is: "What is your opinion on each of the following statements? Please tell me for each statement, whether you are for it or against it". Among the item is: "A common defence and security policy among the European Union members states."

**Table 7: Support for the creation of a European RRF  
(% "very or rather good thing" by country, Autumn 2000)**

Country	B	F	I	L	DK	GR	NL	S
%	82	81	81	79	78	77	77	74

Country	P	FIN	D	E	A	U	IRL	UE 15
%	73	73	70	69	63	60	59	73

Source: EB54.1

More than seven Europeans out of 10 (73 %) believed that the establishment of a rapid reaction force (RRF) of 60,000 men was a very good (23 %) or rather good (50 %) thing. Some 16 % expressed no opinion. In other words, only a very small minority of respondents (14 %) disagreed with that initiative.

In all the Union's countries, over half the respondents believed that the establishment of that rapid reaction force was a very good or rather good thing. In three countries, founder members of Six – namely, Belgium, Italy, and France – the percentages approving even exceeded 80 %. In two of the other six founder countries – Luxembourg and the Netherlands – the percentages of respondents deeming this initiative a very or rather good thing were 79 % and 77 %, respectively. Among the Six, it was only in Germany that the approval rate (70 %) was below the European average (73 %). The three countries which were, relatively speaking, the least enthusiastic about this initiative were Ireland (55 %), the UK (60 %), and Austria (63 %). Nevertheless, it should be noted that, not only was the percentage of people who had no opinion on this matter quite high on average (16 % at the level of the EU as a whole), but also that it varied quite considerably from one country to another: In fact, it rises from a minimum of 6 % in Denmark to a maximum of 34 % in Ireland.

As could be expected, a clearly greater number (nearly two times more) of those who were in favour of the EU's having a common security and defence policy believed that the establishment of a rapid reaction force was a good thing (82 % against 49 %).

#### A TYPOLOGY OF OPINIONS TOWARDS EUROPEAN DEFENCE

This last section presents a typology of European opinions towards ESDP based on three variables from the Autumn 2001 special Eurobarometer on defence. These variables were selected, on the basis of a principal component analysis, out of nine variables and indexes

measuring the various aspects of European defence covered in this survey.<sup>34</sup> These three dimensions are the roles of an European army ("Petersberg index"),<sup>35</sup> the Europeanisation of military structures (a question on the type of a future European army)<sup>36</sup> and the decision-making mechanisms.<sup>37</sup>

Three groups were distinguished: "sceptics", "sympathisers" and "positive pragmatics", to refer to names given to clusters of respondents found in various typologies of European attitudes.<sup>38</sup> The least pro-European group, or "sceptics", represented 10 % of the respondents: these were people who thought that, in the case of military intervention, only the governments of the countries willing to send troops should make the decision; who in the context of ESDP, preferred only national armies or an ad hoc RRF; and whose Petersberg index was less than 2. At the opposite end of the scale, one found the "sympathisers", i.e. a group of 20 % of respondents who were those most favourable to ESDP: they thought that, in the case of military intervention, all the EU member countries, including those who are not willing to send troops, should make the decision; who, in the context of ESDP, would prefer one single European army that would replace national armies or a permanent RRF in addition to national armies; and whose Petersberg index was higher than 2. In between, one found the "positive pragmatics".

It was in Belgium that the percentage of sympathisers was the highest (29 %). In fact, with the exception of Italy, the percentages of sympathisers were the highest in the six founder countries. It was also there that the percentages of sceptics, or least pro-Europeans, were the lowest. At the opposite end, one found the United Kingdom, Ireland and Finland where the percentages of sceptics was the highest and those of sympathisers the lowest.

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<sup>34</sup> For more details on the construction of this typology, see Philippe Manigart, *Europeans and a Common Security and Defense Policy*, op. cit.

<sup>35</sup> This index gives the mean number of Petersberg missions cited by respondents to a question on the roles of a future European army. The index varies between 0 (no role cited) and 6 (all six roles cited).

<sup>36</sup> The question was: "Which of these would you prefer in the context of a common European security and defence policy?" The variable was dichotomized with 0 "National army or ad hoc RRF" and 1 "EU army or permanent RRF". DK/NA were assigned as missing and not included in the computations.

<sup>37</sup> With code 0 for "only the governments of the countries, which are willing to send troops" and 1 for "all the member countries of the EU, including those who are not willing to send troops". DK/NA were assigned as missing.

<sup>38</sup> See INRA, *Typologie de la population européenne: analyse évolutive 1993-1994*. Report written for the Commission of the European Communities (Brussels: INRA, 1995).

The higher the level of education, the more pro-ESDP one tended to be: the percentage of sympathisers goes from 16 % among those who left school before the age of 15 to 23 % among those who studied until the age of 20 or over. The percentage of "sympathisers" was also slightly higher among men than among women (21 % as against 18 %). As far as age was concerned, the percentage of "sceptics", i.e. the least pro-integrationist in matters of defence, increased the older the person: it goes from 9 % among those 15-24 years of age to 13 % among those of 55 or more. People on the right of the political spectrum also tended to be slightly more sceptic than those on the left: the percentage of "sceptics" rises from 12 % to 8 % respectively, while the percentage of "sympathisers" rises from 18 % to 22 %.

## CONCLUSION

From this comparative analysis of the the opinions of the European public towards security and defence policy, it appears that, as a result of the changing geostrategic environment that came from the end of the Cold War and the radically new types of threats that emerged, a clear evolution is visible in the perceptions of Europeans. These changes in the opinions of Europeans, are consistent with the position of Page and Shapiro (among others) that "*the collective policy preferences of the (...) public are predominantly rational, in the sense that they are real – not meaningless, random "nonattitudes"; that they are generally stable (...); that, when collective policy preferences change, they almost always do so in understandable and, indeed, predictable ways, reacting in consistent fashion to international events and social and economic changes as reported by the mass media.*"<sup>39</sup>

So, after 9/11 and its dramatic consequences, fear of terrorism understandably became the most feared threat in all the countries of the European Union. The kinds of roles Europeans think armed forces should play in the post-Cold War era have also evolved: if defence of the country remains the role most frequently cited by respondents, other types of roles are also cited by a great majority of respondents; among them, help to the nation or to other countries in the case of disaster, and peacekeeping or restoring peace. As a result of these new missions, confidence in the military has also increased in most of the EU countries and the draft is now seen as irrelevant by a majority of young Europeans.

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<sup>39</sup> Benjamin Page and Robert Y. Shapiro. *The Rational Public: Fifty Years of Trends in Americans' Policy Preferences* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).



On the subject of a common European Security and Defence Policy, it emerges that while affective support for the idea of a European defence is quite considerable in most of the countries, that support is also rather vague and shallow. In fact, on the one hand, the number of European citizens who have no opinion on this matter – admittedly quite complex and remote from their everyday concerns – is often quite high. On the other hand, while the majority of Europeans are in favour of instituting a European defence, in one form or another – namely, a policy and an organisation which would no longer be strictly national – they are, on the other hand, far from being favourable to a really integrated defence policy.

Quite systematically, public opinion in the EC's six founder countries is most favourable to a common security and defence policy. At the other end of the scale, we most often find the UK. It should be pointed out, however, that this pattern is far from being peculiar to this political area.<sup>40</sup> In other words, while we cannot really speak of a convergence of European public opinion as regards a common security and defence policy, that opinion is often, but not always, in close correlation with those of the respective governments. As regards the question of the direction in which the relationship goes – namely, is it public opinion which influences the national governments' positions or the other way round – this question can't be answered by these cross-sectional surveys.

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<sup>40</sup> This is, for instance, also the case as regards support for the Euro. See standard Eurobarometers.



## **Public Attitudes toward NATO Membership in Aspirant Countries**

**Alina Zilberman  
and Stephen Webber**

The purpose of this chapter is to look at NATO enlargement from the perspective of public opinion in NATO candidate countries.<sup>41</sup> Seven out of the so-called 'Big Bang' countries will be examined in this chapter: Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. These countries were considered to have good prospects of receiving an invitation to join NATO in the Prague Summit in November 2002.

Public support of NATO membership is pivotal and in order to assess it in aspirant countries, multi-country, as well as single-country polls have been conducted by both external and internal polling organisations in recent years. The former, for example, includes surveys conducted by the Central and Eastern Eurobarometer (CEEB), United States Information Agency (USIA), New Democracies Barometer (NDB), New Baltic Barometer (NBB).

In this chapter, we shall examine the results of these general polls first and then elaborate on each country individually. While the focus of this chapter will be on the available data from opinion polls, we do not equate public opinion – a dynamic process, with public opinion polls results – a static representation, a simplified snapshot of a complex phenomenon.

In the countries of the former Soviet block, people have had to face many political, socio-economic transformations unfolding on an unprecedented scale. The issue of NATO membership is another of this kind. What do people think of their countries' entry into the Alliance? What is their rationale in favour and against this membership? Are people aware of the consequences of this membership? Are they prepared to bear the costs and undertake the responsibilities? In the case of its support, is it stable or volatile, considered or emotional? We shall seek to uncover what lies beneath the opinion polls data in

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<sup>41</sup> The authors would like to express their gratitude to the following colleagues, who provided useful comments and information: Apostol Apostolov; Olga Gyarfasova; Marjan Malesic; Gabriela Timofei

order to assess the level and nature of public support of NATO membership.

Public opinion on an issue evolves and develops from disconnected, poorly informed reactions to more considered conclusions, from volatile and unstable opinion to settled judgement.<sup>42</sup> Given a particular policy issue, survey results indeed can be misleading unless one appreciates which stage in the evolution of public opinion they represent. According to Yankelovich, there are seven stages through which public opinion evolves.<sup>43</sup> Schematically, at first people develop an awareness of the issue, and then they look at alternatives. Since people do not fully understand the choices, people may endorse a policy but then back down when the costs are clarified. At this stage, public opinion tends to be volatile. People still have to come to grips with realistic solutions, and part with illusions and unwillingness to face trade-offs. Then people start to weigh arguments in favour of and against the policy, they become more knowledgeable, and finally they come to a conclusion on the issue.<sup>44</sup>

Thus, we shall draw on the available survey data to trace the evolution of public opinion on NATO membership to see whether people in aspirant countries have formed a stable opinion of NATO membership.

As will be demonstrated below, the various polls' findings, when pulled together, represent a methodological challenge on the one hand and a confusing picture on the other, with some polls showing strong support of NATO membership, while others demonstrating a lack of support.<sup>45</sup> Bearing in mind the stages of public opinion formation mentioned above, we shall treat public opinion as a complex of attitudes, which in turn comprises four components: cognition, salience, affect or evaluation and behavioural intention.<sup>46</sup> In our case, we shall trace how public knowledge of NATO, as well as the implications of NATO membership, has developed. Some polls have questions directly related to this. The dynamic of 'don't know' answers will be also useful in assessing the extent to which people are knowledgeable on the issue.

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<sup>42</sup> Daniel Yankelovich, *Coming to Public Judgement* (Syracuse University Press, 1991)

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> This can be attributed to the differences in wording, sampling as well as timing of the survey. This also reflects the evolution of public opinion.

<sup>46</sup> We shall draw on Sinnott's approach. Richard Sinnott, 'European Public Opinion and Security Policy', *Chaillot Paper* 28, (Institute for Security Studies of Western European Union, 1997), available at

<http://www.weu.int/institute/chaillot/chai28e.html>

It is difficult to directly assess the salience of NATO membership when referring to opinion polls: as is generally acknowledged, foreign policy issues are of low salience for the public. However, NATO membership will have *implications for people in the street*, and we shall examine what *issues people can use to connect with membership*. We shall look at what considerations and arguments people use in relation to their attitude toward NATO entry.

Finally, we shall trace whether people have developed a commitment regarding the Alliance. We shall seek to identify whether people have developed an awareness of tradeoffs and a willingness to take on responsibilities. Having identified the above, we, albeit tentatively, due to the limited scope of available data, would argue that while public support of NATO membership in aspirant countries varies, it could be characterised as reasonably grounded and stable by the middle of 2002.

## GENERAL TRENDS

As is demonstrated in the table of this chapter, in the middle of the 1990s, the results of several polls conducted in the same year and the same country tended to vary, with striking differences at times. For example, between 39 percent (CEEB) and 86 percent (NDB) of people gave their support of NATO membership in Slovenia in 1996.<sup>47</sup> This rather suggests that public opinion, in the first stages of its formation, was characterised by volatility. On the other hand, from 1999 onwards, survey results tend to correlate and results in the last two years demonstrate a rather settled picture. This makes us tentatively suggest that public opinion has reached a significant level of stability. To test this hypothesis we shall elaborate on the available multi-country survey data first and then look at each country individually.

The first surveys conducted by the Central Eastern European Barometer (CEEB) have revealed a rather mixed picture. According to the 1995 results, support of NATO membership was prevalent in all countries. However, in 1996 and 1997, support reached only approximately 30 percent on average for all countries except Romania. Romania demonstrated the largest support in all three years, and the range of support was also the largest (95, 76 and 67 percent). Romania also had the smallest proportion of respondents undecided on the issue of NATO membership (8 percent in 1996 and 11 percent in 1997). The proportion of undecided ranged from 21 percent in Slovenia, 22 percent in Bulgaria, 28 percent in Lithuania, 30 percent in Slovakia to 32 percent in Latvia, and 35 percent in Estonia. This data should be treated with caution and seen in the light of other factors. The fact that

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<sup>47</sup> All data as well as the sources are presented in the table

30 percent of the respondents had no opinion on NATO membership suggests that people either had no knowledge of or interest in the issue, and therefore public opinion on the issue was not fully formed. On the other hand, the fact that Romania had the least number of undecided people does not necessarily indicate a high level of knowledge, but may rather reflect a high level of enthusiasm about membership.

The CEEB surveys have also revealed several patterns. According to the 1996 and 1997 data, the most cited reason for joining NATO in all countries was that NATO was viewed as a guarantor of security and stability in the region (49 percent and 52 percent respectively). Among other considerations was the belief that NATO would control and reform the army and the military (11 percent and 13 percent respectively), security from Russia (7 percent and 6 percent, most prominent in the Baltic countries). NATO's contribution to general progress and cooperation (not only in military terms) was reported by 11 percent and 10 percent respectively (mostly in Romania and Bulgaria). In 1996, 11 percent and in 1997, 7 percent of respondents said that their country needed NATO support without providing any reason and 5 percent and 4 percent respectively hoped that NATO membership would help them become a part of Europe (prominent in Bulgaria).

The CEEB reports described reasons against NATO membership as very few and more diffuse. In 1996, 7 percent, and in 1997, 6 percent of respondents preferred neutrality to NATO membership (mostly in the Baltic States), another 4 percent in 1996 and 6 percent in 1997 were against the military and war in general (mainly Slovakia, nearly absent in Romania) and finally 4 percent and 5 percent respectively thought that NATO membership was financially impossible (an opinion that was prominent in Slovakia).

These findings point out the direction of security, political-economic and cultural considerations as related to attitudes toward NATO membership. We shall focus on how security considerations translate into public attitudes toward NATO membership in the case of each country. Security considerations in turn are related to the perceptions of threats.

The New Democracies Barometer, run by the Centre for the Study of Public Policy at the University of Strathclyde, UK,<sup>48</sup> conducted a

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<sup>48</sup> The survey primarily focused on the sources of external threats such as Russia, USA, Germany, neighbouring countries, and immigrants and refugees. As for internal threats, the issue of ethnic minorities was incorporated into the study. For the detailed analysis of this series see Christian Haerpfer, Claire Wallace and Richard Rose, *Public Perceptions of Threats to Security in Post-Communist Europe* (Studies in Public Policy 293, Centre for the Study of Public Policy, Glasgow, 1997); Christian Haerpfer, Cezary Milosinski and Clare Wallace, 'Old and New Security Issues

series of surveys in 1992, 1996 and 1998 in 10 post-communist countries. The surveys dealt with assessing people's perceptions of primarily external threats and attitudes toward NATO membership. The 1996 results showed higher support of NATO membership as compared to those of CEEB. The survey also traced an overall decline in the intensity of perceived threats. Bulgarians and Slovenes felt least threatened, Romanians and Slovaks were among the most threatened.

The most striking difference among the countries is related to the perception of Russia as a threat. In 1992, 1996 and 1998 respectively, Bulgarians perceived it as the lowest threat (only by 6, 5 and 6 percent). In the case of Romania, it was perceived as the largest threat by 62 percent, 55 percent and 42 percent of respondents correspondingly in 1992, 1996 and 1998. Although it has declined, the tendency of perceiving Russia as the largest threat has remained and was confirmed in the 2002 survey conducted by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA).<sup>49</sup> Russia represented the highest threat to Slovaks (26 percent, 51 percent and 45 percent) too, while in the Slovene case, 3 percent, 21 percent and 3 percent of respondents felt threatened by Russia in 1992, 1996 and 1998. In the case of Romania, neighboring countries in the Balkans, presented the second largest threat, perceived by 67 percent, 35 percent and 27 percent of Romanians. This is again confirmed by the 2002 International IDEA study. The third largest threat, according to NDB, is of internal nature, emanating from ethnic minorities.

As for Bulgaria, the Balkans posed the biggest threat as perceived by 61 percent, 31 percent, and 19 percent of respondents in 1992, 1996 and 1998 correspondingly. This tendency was corroborated by the series of surveys conducted by the National Center for Studies of Public Opinion (NCSPO) in the 1990s as well as by the 2002 International IDEA survey. The second biggest threat, according to NDB, comes from ethnic minorities, followed by a fear of immigrants and refugees. In the 1990s, the biggest threat to Slovenia emanated from immigrants and refugees, followed by neighbours and ethnic minorities. Slovaks feared ethnic minorities, neighbouring countries and refugees.

Finally, all four countries considered the USA and Germany as the lowest threat.

How do such perceptions of insecurity translate into public understanding of the best way to provide security for their country and therefore affect attitudes toward NATO membership? In the 1990s, USIA conducted a series of surveys in Central and Eastern European

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in Post-Communist Easter Europe: Results of an 11 Nation Study,' *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 6, (1999): 989-1011

<sup>49</sup> [http://www.idea.int/balkans/survey\\_summary\\_intl\\_inst.htm](http://www.idea.int/balkans/survey_summary_intl_inst.htm)

countries. The 1997 data on the level of support for NATO membership corroborated with the 1998 NDB findings.<sup>50</sup> However, the USIA report concluded that support of NATO membership was rather shallow since people were reluctant to assume responsibilities such as having NATO troops stationed in their countries, or NATO aircraft over-flights, or sending their troops abroad.<sup>51</sup> We shall focus on the dynamics of public commitment to NATO membership while dealing with each country separately. We shall demonstrate that by the middle of 2002, there has been an increase in commitment to NATO among aspirant countries in general, which in turn has substantiated public support for NATO membership.

Finally, we consider the case of the events of September 11, 2001 as a litmus test of sustainability of public attitudes towards NATO membership. Although the tragic events of September 11 caused some fluctuation in public support, they have not nevertheless upset the existing balance of public opinion, which is an indicator of its stability.

## BULGARIA AND ROMANIA

What makes Bulgaria and Romania similar to each other and different from other NATO candidates in the context of this analysis is, firstly, the security implications of their geographical position. Both countries' border with the former Soviet Union as well as the former Yugoslavia. Secondly, both countries are, in economic terms, lagging behind other candidates. As a result, the prospects of EU membership are the most remote for Bulgaria and Romania among all seven candidates.<sup>52</sup>

However, Bulgaria and Romania differ in terms of public opinion on NATO membership. According to public opinion poll data, Romania shows the highest consistent support of NATO membership (80-83 percent in 2002) among all seven candidates. On the whole, since 1999 pro-NATO attitudes have been dominant, as the available data shows. In Bulgaria, from 1997 to 2000, there was a rough parity between pro- and anti-NATO attitudes. In 2001, a majority level of support of NATO membership was recorded. This tendency was sustained up to the middle of 2002, with an occasional decline in support to 49 percent according to the monthly Gallup Bulgarian polls. Support of NATO membership is reported as high as 54 percent to 63 percent in 2002.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> United States Information Agency, *NATO Enlargement: views from the European Continent, Research Report* (Washington DC 20547, 1997)

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> All seven countries under present study are also EU candidates.

<sup>53</sup> The latest official reference to support of NATO membership is made in 'Bulgaria's Achievements and Immediate Goals in Preparation for NATO Member-



To what extent has public opinion on NATO membership settled down in these countries? How are the historic legacy and present domestic situation, as perceived by the public, reflected in Bulgarian and Romanian public attitudes toward NATO membership<sup>54</sup>? How has public opinion evolved?

According to Bulgarian experts, public opinion on NATO membership has passed through three stages.<sup>55</sup> In 1989-1992, NATO was viewed as a rival by the majority and as a 'prospective partner' by a small section of the population. In 1993-1999, the proportion of supporters of NATO entry increased and varied from one-third to one-half. Public attitudes at that time were unstable and sensitive to the unfavourable changes in domestic, regional and international developments. Finally, in 2000-2001, strong support of NATO membership emerged. Neither domestic nor international developments had a permanent impact on pro-NATO attitudes.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, we can trace the evolution of Bulgarian public attitudes toward NATO accession, firstly through the decline in the proportion of those who had no opinion on the issue over the last seven years. According to the CEEB, the proportion of undecided was 22 percent in 1996-1997, and around 12 percent in 1999, 2000 and 2001,<sup>57</sup> indicating an increase in awareness of this issue. To assess whether support is solid, we shall seek to identify the level of commitment of the Bulgarian people to NATO membership. In Romania, the proportion of undecided respondents on the issue of NATO membership has been always rather low therefore in order to assess the quality of support of NATO membership in Romania, we shall explore what lies behind these high figures.

Do people think that their national defence is sufficient, or do they believe that security can be guaranteed only within an alliance? According to the data of the Bulgarian sociological agency 'Alpha Research', at the end of 2001, 62 percent of Bulgarians thought that only

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ship', <http://www.riga.summit.lv/en>. However, the source and the date did not accompany the quoted figure of 63 percent. According to the Gallup Bulgaria, pro-NATO public attitudes have fluctuated between 49 and 55 percent in 2002, <http://www.gallup-bbss.com/pidx/natod.html>

<sup>54</sup> For an overall account of countries' domestic and international contexts see, e.g. Mariana Cernicova-Buca, 'Romania: The Quest for Membership.' In: Gale A Mattox and Arthur R. Rachwald (eds.), *Enlarging NATO: The National Debates* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishes, 2001) pp. 199-217. ; Ognian Minchev, Valeri Ratchev, and Marin Lessenski,(eds.), *Bulgaria for NATO:2002*, (Sofia: Institute for Regional and International Studies, 2002)

<sup>55</sup> National Center for Studies of Public Opinion, 'Bulgarian Attitudes to NATO', *TOL*, 14 June 2002

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Alpha Research, NCSPO

NATO could guarantee the security of their country.<sup>58</sup> Since Bulgarian security is linked to security in the Balkans, public assessment of the NATO role in the Balkans affects public opinion on security issues. Yordanova and Zhelev point out the difference in people's perceptions of the Bosnian and Kosovo crises. During the former, people felt hopeless, whereas during the latter, although they perceived themselves to be under threat, Bulgarians also felt somewhat protected by the new NATO-dominated security system.<sup>59</sup> This controversy can be seen as reflected in a paradox that, on the one hand, the majority of Bulgarians disapproved of the NATO military intervention, but on the other, a majority also supported the Bulgarian government's decision to provide access to air space for the NATO aircraft.<sup>60</sup> The Kosovo crisis really split society. The NCSPO poll of April 1999 revealed that 42 percent of Bulgarians believed that NATO membership had been the best way to guarantee the security, whereas 41 percent were in favour of neutrality.<sup>61</sup> Nearly half of those interviewed in May 1999 believed that in the case of an attack on Bulgaria, NATO would defend it. At the same time, only 14% of Bulgarians thought that the Bulgarian army would have been capable of defending the country on its own.<sup>62</sup> This data suggest that in 1999, at least half of Bulgarians regarded NATO membership as a necessity from a security point of view.

According to the poll ordered by the Romanian Ministry of Defence and conducted by the Institute of Marketing and Polls (IMAS) in May 2000, 59 percent of respondents thought that joining NATO was the best solution to ensure national security, 19.9 percent preferred neutrality and 6.5 percent had no answer.<sup>63</sup> However, other responses reveal an inconsistency in public attitudes and undermine the security-driven rationale for pro-NATO attitudes, despite the above-mentioned factors and the high level of insecurity. When asked whether getting closer to NATO would deteriorate Romania's relations with Russia and other CIS countries, 41 percent of Romanians agreed and 41.4 percent disagreed with this prospect, and 17.6 percent had no answer. Moreover, 59.1 percent of respondents agreed that Romania's membership in the Partnership for Peace was a solution that ensured the security of their country, while 21.9 percent had no

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<sup>58</sup> Quoted in Lydia Yordanova, Ivo Zhelev, 'Public Attitudes to NATO Membership'. In: Ognyan Minchev, Valeri Ratchev, and Marin Lessenski, (eds.), *Bulgaria for NATO: 2002*, (Sofia: Institute for Regional and International Studies, 2002), p. 362.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, p. 367

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, p. 370

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, p. 368

<sup>63</sup> IMAS, <http://domino.kappa.ro/imas>

answer. On the other hand, 31.9 percent did not know that Romania had joined the Partnership for Peace. Finally, when asked about the Romanian army, 89.7 percent of respondents stated that it ensured national security. What is evident from this data is that the Romanian public had a rather limited knowledge of the Alliance in 2000, and was inconsistent when connecting security considerations alongside the issue of NATO membership.

We shall now look at what Bulgarians and Romanians expect from NATO membership and whether they connect their expectations with possible tradeoffs. In a poll conducted by NCSPD, Bulgarian respondents were asked to name the advantages of NATO membership. The majority of respondents named the following: modernisation of the army (61 percent), strengthening of peace in the Balkans (60.2 percent), national security (58.1 percent), professionalisation of the army (56.8 percent) and security for foreign investment in Bulgaria (52.1 percent)<sup>64</sup>. These findings corroborate with the CEEB data quoted above and point to the primacy of security-related considerations.

As for Romania, the top three consequences of NATO membership according to the IMAS poll were: increased credibility for foreign investment (51 percent); increase in expenditure on defence (45.3 percent); and modernisation of the defence industry (43.7 percent). An additional guarantee to national security was named in fourth place by 40.5 percent of respondents.<sup>65</sup> This in fact reconciles the inconsistency with regard to security considerations, as economic considerations play a role in assessing the consequences of NATO membership. The fact that Romanian respondents mentioned an increase of military expenses points to the awareness of Romanian society of the trade-offs and costs related to NATO membership.

Finally, we shall focus on evidence of whether the support of joining NATO is grounded in the Bulgarian and Romanian people's willingness to take on NATO responsibilities. Available data reflects the increase in the Romanian public commitment to the Alliance. According to the 2000 IMAS poll that revealed 75.5 percent support of NATO membership, only 31.2 percent of respondents agreed with NATO troops stationed in Romania, 55 percent disagreed and 13.8 percent had no opinion,<sup>66</sup> then support of stationing NATO troops in

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<sup>64</sup> Lydia Yordanova, Ivo Zhelev, 'Public Attitudes to NATO Membership'. In: Ognian Minchev, Valeri Ratchev, and Marin Lessenski, (eds.), *Bulgaria for NATO: 2002*, (Sofia: Institute for Regional and International Studies, 2002), p 365

<sup>65</sup> <http://domino.kappa/imas>

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*

Romania rose from 48 percent in 2001 to 68 percent in 2002.<sup>67</sup> Meanwhile, compared to the result in 2000, in which 46.1 percent agreed with sending Romanian troops abroad, whereas 45.2 percent disagreed or agreed to a small extent and 8.6 percent had no opinion, support of sending Romanian troops abroad increased from 70 percent in 2001 to 74 percent in 2002.<sup>68</sup> Finally, increasing the defence budget by reducing other expenditures in the national budget was supported by 63 percent of respondents in 2001-2002.<sup>69</sup>

Bulgarian public opinion was rather cautious on the issue of Bulgarian participation in military or peacekeeping operations in 2001:<sup>70</sup> peace enforcing actions were supported by only 13-14 percent of the population. The biggest support (61percent) is given to humanitarian operations.<sup>71</sup> On the other hand, support of NATO membership is a sign of stability. The September 11 events did not affect pro-NATO attitudes. According to the monthly data of the Gallup Bulgaria monthly polls, support of NATO membership was registered as high as: 52 percent (August 2001), 52 percent (September 2001), 51 percent (October 2001), 48 percent (November 2001) and 54 percent (December 2001). The events of September 11 did not affect Romanian support of NATO membership. Therefore, by the middle of 2002, both the Bulgarian and Romanian public had consolidated stable support of NATO membership, which was more enthusiastic in the case of Romania (over 80 percent) in comparison to Bulgaria (over 50 percent). Both countries also exhibited a relatively steady public commitment to the Alliance.

## SLOVAKIA AND SLOVENIA

We shall now look at two Central Eastern European countries, Slovakia and Slovenia, both of which emerged as a result of the disintegration of the federal states – Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia respectively. What are public attitudes toward NATO membership in these countries?

In the case of Slovakia, (according to the limited available data), support of NATO membership was present in 1998 (between 58 and

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<sup>67</sup> Source: Metro Media Transylvania, quoted in *Political and Public Support for Romanian Candidacy to NATO*, Romania's Ministry of Defence, Department of Euro-Atlantic Integration and Defence Policy, Defence and Security Policy Division, 2002

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>70</sup> National Center for Studies of Public Opinion, 'Bulgarian Attitudes to NATO', *TOL*, 14 June 2002

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, 'Bulgarian Attitudes to NATO', *TOL*, 14 June 2002

71 percent), then it dropped in 1999 (39 percent), and has been growing since 2000 (47 percent), having reached 52 percent in 2001 and 59.8 percent in June 2002.

As for Slovenia, the available data represents the most confusing picture. However, it would be safe to say that having reached its peak in 1998<sup>72</sup> (between 58 and 71 percent), support of NATO membership in Slovenia has steadily declined since then.<sup>73</sup> In July 2002, 39 percent of all respondents intended to vote for NATO membership in the case of a referendum.<sup>74</sup> Is there enough evidence to conclude that support of NATO membership has stabilised and settled?

In Slovakia, there has been a definite decrease in the proportion of people undecided on the issue of NATO membership. In June 2002, 6.1 percent of respondents were undecided on the issue of membership<sup>75</sup> as opposed to 30 percent in 1996.<sup>76</sup> However, in Slovenia, the proportion of people undecided on the NATO membership has remained relatively high. Due to the availability of data from 1994/1995, 1997 and 2002, we can trace the dynamics of people's attitudes toward NATO. In the December 1994/January 1995 opinion poll, 44.2 percent of respondents supported the Slovenian government's efforts to join NATO, while 8.6 percent did not and 47.2 percent were undecided.<sup>77</sup> The high proportion of undecided people suggests that people were still quite unfamiliar with the issue. Then it declined to a level between 17.9<sup>78</sup> and 21 percent<sup>79</sup> and since then, it has

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<sup>72</sup> Marian Malesic and Ljubica Jelusic refer to 1997 as a peak year for support of NATO membership, while drawing on the Slovene Public Opinion data solely. (Marian Malesic and Ljubica Jelusic, 'Popular Perception of Security in Slovenia', Paper presented at the interim meeting of the ERGOMAS working group 'Public Opinion, Mass Media and the Military', Madrid, 17-21 April 2002). We draw on the data from several different opinion polls that indicate the year 1998 as a peak for pro-NATO attitudes in Slovenia.

<sup>73</sup> This is in line with Malesic's conclusion, *ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> Politbarometer,

<http://nato.gov.si/eng/public-opinion/politbarometer-results/2002-07.pdf>

<sup>75</sup> *Slovakia on the Road to NATO Prague Summit: Preparing for Membership*, News Brief prepared by the Institute for public Affairs, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, available at [http://www.ivo.sk/slovakia\\_nato.htm](http://www.ivo.sk/slovakia_nato.htm)

<sup>76</sup> CEEB No 7

<sup>77</sup> Anton Grizold and Ljubica Jelusic, 'Slovenian Security in the European Perspective', *Project on Defense Alternatives*, (1999), available at

<http://www.comw.org/pda/9909slov.html>

<sup>78</sup> Quoted in Marian Malesic and Ljubica Jelusic, 'Popular Perception of Security in Slovenia', Paper presented at the interim meeting of the ERGOMAS working group 'Public Opinion, Mass Media and the Military', Madrid, 17-21 April 2002

<sup>79</sup> CEEB No 7

been fluctuating between 17.6 and 27.6 percent.<sup>80</sup> The above-mentioned trend remained in 2002, with the proportion of undecided fluctuating between 15.2 to 24 percent.<sup>81</sup> This is rather high and suggests that NATO membership has remained either of low salience or that the public has not been adequately informed about the nature of the membership, although the Slovene government has, in fact, conducted an intensive information campaign.

To investigate the nature of support of NATO membership, we shall therefore examine to what extent and how security considerations resonate with public attitudes towards the Alliance. According to Slovak and Slovenian experts, internal threats are much more salient than external sources of insecurity for their respective publics. Krivy and Gyarfasova point out that Slovaks are more concerned about organised crime and the standard of living in Slovakia than terrorism or uncontrollable immigration, while regarding an external military threat as something rather abstract.<sup>82</sup> In Slovenia, the same tendency prevails. According to the Slovene Public Opinion 2001 survey, eleven sources of internal threats, as rated by respondents, precede the threat posed by refugees and illegal immigrants. Terrorism took the seventeenth position, followed by the conflicts on the territory of the former Yugoslavia and military threats posed by other countries.<sup>83</sup>

Given this low salience of external security threats, to what extent do security considerations influence public attitudes towards NATO membership? On the surface, concerns about national security are the major rationale presented in pro-NATO stances. On the other hand, it is a contested issue in Slovakia. Both proponents and opponents of NATO entry use the issue of national security as their main argument, while pointing out prospects for enhanced security and increased risks correspondingly.<sup>84</sup> Those who did not see NATO membership as a means to provide security, while asked about an alternative, either had no opinion, or preferred self-reliance or neutrality for their country.<sup>85</sup>

According to Krivy and Gyarfasova, the Slovak public is worried about the consequences of NATO membership. Given the general disposition towards 'non-interventionism', the prospects of Slovakia's

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<sup>80</sup> Quoted in Marian Malesic and Ljubica Jelusic, 'Popular Perception of Security in Slovenia', Paper presented at the interim meeting of the ERGOMAS working group 'Public Opinion, Mass Media and the Military', Madrid, 17-21 April 2002

<sup>81</sup> Politbarometer, <http://nato.gov.si/eng/public-opinion/politbarometer>

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> <http://nato.gov.si/eng/public-opinion/public-opinion-data/>

<sup>84</sup> Vladimir Krivy and Olga Gyarfasova, 'The Relationship of the Slovak Public to the North Atlantic Alliance-Value and Attitude Contexts', *Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs*, (2001): 27-39

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

involvement in conflicts are of serious concern among the Slovak people.<sup>86</sup> We agree with Krivy and Gyarfasova, that given the above attitudes and predisposition, security considerations do not form a solid basis of NATO support.<sup>87</sup>

To what extent do Slovak people demonstrate their commitment to NATO responsibilities? Some 68 percent of NATO entry proponents were willing to undertake the obligations with membership in a survey conducted in December 2000.<sup>88</sup> What do the Slovenian people associate with the Alliance? When presented in 1995 with three groups of arguments dealing with the advantages and disadvantages of NATO membership in terms of political and military/defence outcomes, as well as implications of having foreign-armed bases stationed in Slovenia, people put advantages on top of the list of expected outcomes. Over 70 percent agreed that admission to NATO would mean access to modern weapons, over and around 60 percent of respondents agreed that NATO membership would improve Slovenia's international standing, increase security and bring Slovenia closer to Europe.<sup>89</sup>

Despite the fact that in 1995, 44.2 percent of respondents supported the Slovenian government's efforts to join NATO, while 8.6 percent did not and 47.2 percent were undecided, people were rather positive about the outcomes, though the abstract nature of their responses is another indicator that they are hardly aware of the issue. In July 1997, a telephone survey was conducted on NATO accession. Some 59.4 percent of respondents reported an intention to vote for NATO accession, whereas 17.1 percent of interviewees would have voted against it. However, when faced with an alternative of neutrality, only 43.1 percent chose NATO membership, while 40.8 percent chose neutrality.<sup>90</sup> Further results fluctuated considerably in favour or against NATO membership depending on the conditions attached. Some 75.1 percent supported NATO membership if it meant the reduction of danger of a military attack on Slovenia, whereas if NATO membership meant an increase in unemployment, only 15.1 percent of respondents would endorse it. Opinion was also nearly equally split

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> Vladimir Krivy and Olga Gyarfasova, 'The Relationship of the Slovak Public to the North Atlantic Alliance-Value and Attitude Contexts', *Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs*, (2001): 27-39

<sup>89</sup> Anton Grizold and Ljubica Jelusic, 'Slovenian Security in the European Perspective', *Project on Defense Alternatives*, (1999), available at

<http://www.comw.org/pda/9909slov.html>

<sup>90</sup> NATO'97. Public Opinion Research, available at

<http://www.ljudmila.org/neutro/raziskave/nato97/eng/index.html>

between those who thought that the economic and political situation would improve, deteriorate or would not change as a result of NATO membership. The results of this poll present evidence that in 1997 the Slovenian public opinion entered a stage of high volatility. This poll also revealed a lack of knowledge about NATO and the consequences of its membership for Slovenia.<sup>91</sup> Grizold and Jelusic offer a similar assessment of Slovenian opinion in 1997. Slovenian people were engaged in the issue more emotionally than rationally.<sup>92</sup> They also point out a lack of knowledge on the issue of NATO accession: only 16.4 of participants in a poll in March 1997 considered themselves well-informed, while 30.1 percent considered themselves ill-informed about Slovenia's plans to join NATO.<sup>93</sup>

In light of the above, it is not surprising that in 1997 Slovenes showed little commitment to the Alliance. According to the 1997 USIA survey, which registered low commitment among NATO candidates on a whole, Slovenes were less supportive of sending troops abroad or stationing NATO troop in Slovenia than others.<sup>94</sup>

How has Slovenian opinion evolved since then? As mentioned before, there has been a steady decline in support of NATO membership with the perceived increase in defence spending that it would entail serving as a strong deterrent<sup>95</sup>. On the other hand, there has been an increase in the commitment to take on NATO responsibilities. Although there was a decline between 1999 and 2001 in absolute numbers, the majority of people still supported Slovenian participation in peace operations (78 percent and 69 percent) in 1999 and 2001. In 2001, 84 percent agreed with the idea of unarmed humanitarian operations, 74 percent approved of peacekeeping operations where weapons could be used in self-defence, and 39 percent supported combat peace-making operations outside Slovenia. Slovenia demonstrated high support of NATO actions in Kosovo and the Slovenian government's decision to allow NATO to use its air space.<sup>96</sup>

According to the latest available poll conducted by the Public Opinion Research Centre at the University of Ljubljana in March 2002, financial considerations topped the list of arguments on both sides. Some 43.6 percent of respondents agreed that NATO member-

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<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> Anton Grizold and Ljubica Jelusic, 'Slovenian Security in the European Perspective', *Project on Defense Alternatives*, (1999), available at

<http://www.comw.org/pda/9909slov.html>

<sup>95</sup> <http://nato.gov.si/eng/public-opinion/public-opinion-data>

<sup>96</sup> Anton Bebler, Slovenia and NATO, <http://nato.gov.si/eng>



ship was too costly; while 31.2 of the respondents maintained that collective security was cheaper. The second argument in favour of NATO membership – NATO is the best way for collective security – was supported by 24 percent, followed by expectations of positive effects on the economy (13.8 percent), then by the statement that the majority of West European countries are in NATO (15 percent). Those who opposed NATO membership did so on the grounds of their negative attitude towards the domination of American interests in NATO (22.3 percent), their opposition of the participation of Slovene soldiers in foreign battlefields (18.5 percent) and the fact that no one endangers Slovenia (8 percent).<sup>97</sup> Some 44.4 percent reported that they were well informed about NATO accession.

This data confirms that security, economic and cultural considerations are intertwined and very often used as arguments among both proponents and opponents of NATO accession. Given the above analysis, we can tentatively conclude that security considerations do not play a decisive role in shaping public attitudes towards NATO membership due to the low salience of security risks in Slovakia and Slovenia. The prospect of an increase in defence spending associated with NATO membership for many Slovenes, on the other hand, are a strong deterrent factor affecting people's position on NATO accession.

Given all the above, we can also suggest that while it has declined, a relative majority of Slovenes support NATO membership. Besides, the public has become more informed and rational in Slovenia. The case of the events of September 11 supports this conclusion as it demonstrates that, although the level of support for NATO membership fluctuated, it nevertheless remained within the general trend.<sup>98</sup> In Slovakia, support of NATO membership has been steadily growing. This is perhaps surprising in the aftermath of September 11, given the Slovak wariness about military involvement and the possible increased chances of it if the country joins NATO. However, polls conducted after September 11 have not registered a significant deviation of results.<sup>99</sup> This can be regarded as evidence that support of NATO in Slovakia has settled. The steady growth of support of NATO membership, however, should be attributed to factors other than security related; e.g. the consolidation of political consensus and an intensive information campaign in favour of NATO. In both countries, public attitudes towards NATO membership have undergone a change. In

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<sup>97</sup> <http://nato.gov.si/eng>

<sup>98</sup> Politbarometer,

<http://nato.gov.si/eng/public-opinion/politbarometer-results/2001>

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

Slovenia, support has been declining, whereas in Slovakia, it has been growing. Despite this difference, the common feature is that the support level has been relatively stable and rooted in the public commitment to the Alliance.

### ESTONIA, LATVIA AND LITHUANIA

The Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania form the most homogenous group among the aspirant countries in terms of their historical legacy, geographical position, economic standing and ethnic makeup. All three countries have a relatively large minority of Russian residents.<sup>100</sup> This makes the Baltics quite distinct from the other countries in terms of public attitudes towards NATO membership, as Russian residents have been much less pro-NATO oriented. In this respect, one should be cautious when looking at opinion polls since the results differ depending on whether residents or citizens are interviewed. For example, in March 1996, CEEB reported the support of NATO membership as high as 78 percent in Estonia, 71 percent in Latvia and 83 percent in Lithuania. In the following two, CEEB interviewed residents, and the difference in results is striking: 32 percent, 31 percent and 28 percent of respondents in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania respectively voiced their support of NATO entry in 1996. The figures for the following year were almost the same (32 percent, 36 percent and 28 percent). The data from the New Baltic Barometer, conducted by the Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, represent another graphic example of the difference in attitude among Baltic majorities and Russian minorities. In 2000, 70 percent of Estonians as opposed to 17 percent of Russians endorsed Estonia's NATO membership. The same large disparity was reported in Latvia (58 percent vs 18 percent) and Lithuania (47 percent vs 16 percent), and this trend has been prevalent throughout the whole period under study. What are the other trends of public opinion on NATO entry in the Baltics?

According to the CEEB surveys of 1995, 1996 and 1997, the Baltics had the highest proportion (nearly one third) of undecided respondents on the issue of NATO membership. What were the reasons for joining NATO for those who supported it? Not surprisingly, the Baltic people named security in general, as well as security against Russia (mainly in Estonia). Security considerations also prevailed in views

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<sup>100</sup> The term 'Russian residents' refers to Russian people and people of other nationalities (e.g. Ukrainians or Belarussians) who speak Russian at home, and who permanently reside in the Baltic States. In most cases, they are not citizens of these countries and have no right to vote. Lithuania has the smallest proportion of Russian population of the three states.

against NATO membership, such as a preference for neutrality (particularly in Latvia and Estonia). General antipathy towards military affairs, as well as the perceived unbearable financial burden of NATO membership was the reason reported in Estonia in 1996. The question of where their countries' future laid, which was asked in all three surveys, revealed a trend. In all the countries, in all the years, the EU has been seen as the major influence, followed by the counterbalancing influence of Russia. Between 1995-1997, public opinion on NATO membership in the Baltics could be described as embryonic for nearly a third of the population, but already with definite signs of polarisation between ethnic majorities and minorities, with Russia being a source of discord.

In 1998, Baltic Surveys conducted a poll on security issues among residents in the three Baltic States on behalf of the NATO office of Information and Press, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania.<sup>101</sup> The poll was aimed to gauge not only support and reasons in favour of and against NATO membership but also knowledge of and trust in NATO as well as people's commitment to the Alliance. Support of NATO membership stood as high as 55 percent in Lithuania, 47 percent in Latvia and 54 percent in Estonia, which is higher than in the previous years. However, negative attitudes towards NATO membership were also higher than in the preceding polls. Both increases should be attributed to the decrease in the proportion of undecided. Despite this decrease, the data does not allow us to conclude that public opinion has significantly advanced in its understanding or knowledge of the issue in 1998.

On the issue of costs related to accession, roughly one third of respondents could not answer the question, whereas the rest were split on the issue, with a bigger proportion of respondents agreeing that membership was too expensive. Was NATO considered the best way to provide security? Some 26 percent Lithuanians expressed this view, whereas Latvians considered neutrality as the best security option (29 percent). In Estonia, NATO and EU membership together are the best guarantee (30 percent). What were the arguments in favour of NATO membership? With slight variation among countries, the major pro-NATO argument was a security consideration, while those who opposed the membership, did so either because it was too costly or because neutrality was considered a better option.

This was a stage at which the public had developed some knowledge and awareness of the issue, and an opinion was forming as a result of assessing and connecting various factors together. However, people still admitted to themselves that they lacked sufficient knowledge to form a considered opinion. After the survey, they were asked

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<sup>101</sup> Data available at <http://www.fas.org/man/nato/national/980300-opinion.htm>

which issues they would like to learn more about. Most of the respondents named costs, advantages, and responsibilities related to NATO membership as well as how NATO guarantees security to its members. Some regional experts also argued that at the end of the 1990s, public opinion on NATO membership had been far from settled (Grazina Minotaite, for example, pointed to the volatility of Lithuanian public opinion at that time<sup>102</sup>). In 1999, anti-Western sentiments rose as a reaction to the Kosovo crisis, and public support of NATO membership dropped from 55 percent to 31 percent. It increased again after the end of the Kosovo crisis.<sup>103</sup>

The year 2000 witnessed a rise in pro-NATO attitudes in Lithuania from 38.6 percent in January to 49 percent in December according to the data of Baltijos Tyrimai.<sup>104</sup> Minotaite tentatively connects this to the government information campaign on Lithuania's integration into NATO launched in September 1999. In order to assess the quality of public opinion at that stage, we need to look at more detailed data. NBB conducted a survey in all three countries between February and May 2000. Although the survey dealt with the NATO issue only briefly, it gave some idea of public awareness of the NATO membership issue. When people were asked to assess to what extent NATO membership would be beneficial to their countries, 22 percent of Latvians and Lithuanians, 26 percent of Russians residents of Latvia and Lithuania, 13 percent of Estonians and 17 percent of Estonian Russians had no opinion on the issue. From a comparative perspective, the proportion of 'no answer' for other questions related to international issues, such as perceptions of threat were between 8-14 percent on the average.<sup>105</sup> No one in the Baltics really considered Germany or the USA as a threat. Russia was perceived as a significant threat by ethnic majorities but not by Russians, which proves that this trend had persisted.

However, Latvian opinion on NATO and defence issues, according to the poll conducted by Lavijas Fakti in 2000, appears better informed. For a start, only 14 percent of the respondents did not give an answer to the question of whether they supported Latvia's efforts to join NATO.<sup>106</sup> 53.4 percent expressed their support and 32.6 percent voiced their disapproval of NATO membership. Pro-Nato arguments

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<sup>102</sup> Grazina Minotaite, 'Lithuania and NATO Enlargement', *Baltic Defence Review*, No 6 (2001), 33

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> Richard Rose, 'New Baltic Barometer IV: A Survey Study', *Studies in Public Policy* 338, (Glasgow: Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, 2000) pp 36-39

<sup>106</sup> <http://www.mod.lv/english/06darbs/04sab.php>

were mostly security-related. Those who opposed membership drew on the arguments that it was too costly and that Latvia would lose its independence. Survey participants were also asked to assess the consequences of Latvia's joining NATO. 41.1 percent (lower than the rate of approval) agreed that membership was the least expensive way to provide security, whereas 34.6 percent considered membership too costly. Some 51.7 percent reported their approval of NATO goals and policy, 61.1 percent supported the participation of the Latvian armed forces in international peace operations.

This data in fact reveals that a proportion of the people had formed a coherent and considered judgement about the NATO membership, and while remaining aware of the increase in costs, still supported the membership. In fact, there is evidence that in 2001, public opinion in Lithuania did not reach the stage of maturity, since support of NATO in Lithuania soared after the events of September 11 and reached 63.1 percent compared to 46 percent in early 2001.<sup>107</sup> It then dropped again, and as of April 2002 was 45 percent.<sup>108</sup>

Although it is perfectly understandable that the emotional reaction to the terrorist attacks in the USA would have an effect on the fluctuation in public opinion, the lower the degree of fluctuation and the shorter the time of restoring the previous position, the more stable public opinion can be seen to be. In the case of Estonia, for example, in August 2001, support of NATO membership stood at 61 percent. It then dropped to 56 percent at the end of September, and rose to 64 percent at the beginning of September 2001.<sup>109</sup> There was another similar fluctuation of opinion in the middle of November 2001, where support of NATO membership declined from 63 to 58 percent and then rose again to 63 percent within a month. On a whole, within the last half of 2001, public opinion was relatively stable.<sup>110</sup>

Finally, according to a poll conducted in Estonia in March 2002, support of NATO had remained stable among both Estonians and non-Estonians – 53 % comparatively to 54 percent in October 2001.<sup>111</sup> 72 percent of respondents supported the increase or the maintenance of defence spending at the same level, comparatively to 69 percent of support in October 2001. This allows us to tentatively conclude that

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<sup>107</sup> Grazina Minotaite, 'Lithuania and NATO Enlargement', *Baltic Defence Review*, No 6 (2001), 33

<sup>108</sup> EMOR, Estonia, available at  
<http://www.emor.ee/eng/arhiiv.html?id=902&print=1>

<sup>109</sup> EMOR data analysed by Argo Ideon, *Postimees*, 7 January 2002

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> ES Turu-uuringute AS, available at  
<http://www.mod.gov.ee/static/news/files/NATOmarts2002.pdf>

support of NATO membership has stabilised in the Baltics, possibly more in Estonia and to a lesser extent in Lithuania.

## CONCLUSION

We have looked at the dynamics of public opinion on NATO membership in the seven aspirant countries. In all of them, public opinion has evolved from emotional and volatile attitudes to a rather considered and settled position. This has been accompanied by increased knowledge and awareness of the consequences of NATO membership, an evaluation of the tradeoffs and the development of commitment to the Alliance. Though it still fluctuates due to the unavoidable emotional response to various external upheavals such as the September 11 attacks on the USA, public opinion on NATO membership has rather settled in the aspirant countries since the middle of 2002. While looking at the nature of public opinion on NATO membership, we have focused on security related factors. However, to fully assess the nature of attitudes toward NATO membership, it is necessary to consider political, economic, and cultural factors as well: public attitudes toward NATO membership, for instance, are also often entwined in issues relating to EU membership.

According to all CEEB reports, Romanians have consistently been the most supportive of EU membership among all aspirant countries. Bulgarians exhibit a consolidated support as well. According to the Alpha Research data of July 2001, Bulgarians favour membership to the EU (91 percent) over NATO (61 percent). "In public perceptions, NATO membership is an integral element of the European integration of Bulgaria. In the last couple years, NATO membership became a guiding benchmark and a bridge to EU membership itself."<sup>112</sup> Attitudes toward the Alliance are full of intense expectations for Bulgaria's quick integration into the Euro-Atlantic Alliance since EU integration will take a longer period of time. Given that both Bulgaria and Romania face the most remote prospects of joining the EU due to their economic problems, the attractiveness of NATO membership as a step toward EU membership is true for Romania as well.

As was pointed out earlier, for example, in Slovakia, opponents of NATO entry point out such consequences as increased expenses, while the view that NATO membership could bring some economic and general benefits is insufficiently spread out among the Slovak

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<sup>112</sup> Lydia Yordanova, Ivo Zhelev, 'Public Attitudes to NATO Membership'. In: Ognian Minchev, Valeri Ratchev, and Marin Lessenski, (eds.), *Bulgaria for NATO: 2002*, (Sofia: Institute for Regional and International Studies, 2002), p. 360

public.<sup>113</sup> The prospects of prosperity are perceived as rather related to EU membership, which enjoys higher support among the Slovaks.<sup>114</sup> Therefore, it is not surprising that Slovakia demonstrates more enthusiasm towards EU than NATO membership.<sup>115</sup> The 1999 and 2001 Defence Studies Research Centre's survey allowed for comparison between attitudes toward NATO and EU membership in Slovenia. Not surprisingly, support of EU membership was slightly higher. According to a survey among opinion leaders, EU membership is perceived from the aspect of economic considerations first, followed by cultural issues (such as affinity with European values), and finally security considerations (such as distancing itself from the Balkans and leaving the 'grey zone' of the European *cordon sanitaire*).<sup>116</sup> Given the low salience of security considerations, coupled with negative attitudes towards increases in defence spending, EU membership understandably looks more attractive. The Baltics differ from the rest in terms of their relationship to NATO vs. the EU. The ethnic majorities are more supportive of NATO membership, whereas ethnic minorities favour EU membership<sup>117</sup>. This is because the ethnic majorities are more concerned about security guarantees that NATO could provide for them, whereas ethnic minorities hope that EU membership will bring economic prosperity.

Public attitudes towards NATO membership in aspirant countries are grounded on a variety of considerations such as security, economic, cultural. They are dependent on the countries' backgrounds as well as anticipated future paths. We have traced the evolution of public support from the emotional and volatile attitudes in the middle of the 1990s to the considerably more knowledgeable and committed nature of support by the middle of 2002. Aspirant countries vary in their level of public support, with Romania being the most enthusiastic proponent and Slovenia exhibiting the lowest support, due to a different interplay of various factors. What aspirant countries share is the quality of public support of NATO membership, which can be characterised as relatively consolidated, stable, and well grounded in the countries' commitments towards the Alliance.

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<sup>113</sup> Vladimir Krivy and Olga Gyrafasova, 'The Relationship of the Slovak Public to the North Atlantic Alliance-Value and Attitude Contexts', *Slovak Foreign Policy Affairs*, (2001): 27-39

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> Central and East European Barometer No 8, March 1998

<sup>116</sup> Anton Grizold and Ljubica Jelusic, 'Slovenian Security in the European Perspective', *Project on Defense Alternatives*, (1999), available at

<http://www.comw.org/pda/9909slov.html>

<sup>117</sup> Richard Rose, 'New Baltic Barometer IV: A Survey Study', *Studies in Public Policy* 338, (Glasgow: Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, 2000) pp 36-39, CEEB No 9





## **Tradition as a Political Value – The Public Image of Security, Defense and Military in Switzerland**

**Karl W. Haltiner**

Switzerland is widely known for having a militia as its regular armed forces. Its militia army received a great deal of international attention at the beginning of the nineties, when a group of citizens sought its abolition in a national referendum. Both phenomena point at a peculiar linkage between the political system and national security, and the latter, beyond that, at a fundamental socio-cultural change of civil-military relations. If one is to study the public image of security, defense, and the military in Switzerland over the last decades, it is indispensable to take into account the specific political and historical framework within which public opinion is formed. In regard to its security and defense policies, as well as the institutional layout of its military, Switzerland is undoubtedly an exception in Europe.

This article begins with a brief outline of the most significant pillars of Swiss political culture – direct democracy, a federal, decentralized form of state, the tradition of neutrality and the militia – as well as reforms within the security sector that have been under way since 1990. Then, an evaluation of the public's view on foreign policy and the armed forces during the last three decades, as well as an outlook on trends in the nearer future will be given. The analysis will show that Swiss public opinion, despite being embedded in a peculiar political culture and security institutions, and despite its tendency to cling to the status quo, takes on European trends of public opinion and reform of the security sector albeit with a considerable time lag.

The following report is based on surveys, which have been carried out at irregular intervals since the eighties and annually since 1991. They focus on trends and tendencies of public opinion on the Swiss security sector.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> The goal of the annual study "Security", carried out jointly by the Military Academy at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich and the Center for Security Studies and Conflict Research of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich, is to highlight public opinion trends on security and foreign policy issues in Switzerland. The research is based on representative annual and biannual polls. The surveys are usually carried out in February among about 1000 to 1200 Swiss citizens

## HISTORICAL AND SOCIETAL FRAMEWORK OF THE SWISS SECURITY INSTITUTIONS

Switzerland's modern organization of state, a federation of formerly loosely associated sovereign small states (cantons), dates back to 1848. The founding of today's federation was the conclusion of a gradual unification process, which took more than five hundred years to unfold. Because modern Switzerland – other than most European states characterized by feudalism – grew together gradually through a bottom-up process that took hundreds of years, a high degree of local autonomy and sovereignty of communities and cantons was maintained. The state structure is characterized by an unusually strong decentralization of political power with much authority and autonomy remaining within the communities. This is also the case with the institutions of national security, the military, civil defense, and the police. According to the constitution, the twenty-six Swiss cantons are still responsible for specific equipment and canton units within the federal armed forces, even though the federation exerts supreme control over the military. This is also evident in the fact that cantons and communities autonomously organize institutions of internal security – police and civil defense – with the federation playing only a subsidiary role. But nothing could serve better to illustrate the high degree of decentralization within the security sector than the fact that not only the federal government in Berne, but also every canton has its own ministry of defense.

Fortunately, the country was spared of the great wars that took place on the European continent in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Apart from civil war-like skirmishes at the time of the creation of the modern federation in 1847/48, the last war fought on Swiss territory dates back to the Napoleonic era. However, the great European wars forced the small nation in the heart of the continent to considerable defensive efforts and the deeply felt threat during World War II left its mark on the national defense identity and on the public image of the defense institutions (Haltiner et al. 2001, pp. 97-100). Yet, revolutionary ruptures in military tradition, which took place in other European nations several times even in the course of the last two hundred years, did not take place in Switzerland (Frevert, ed. 1997. Jaun 1997 and 1998).

The Swiss militia tradition is older than the *levée en masse* in France and clearly linked to the early forms of direct democracy.<sup>119</sup> The histori-

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entitled to vote (i.e. at least 18 years old). A "random quota" sampling procedure is applied and the interviews are generally made by telephone (CATI).

<sup>119</sup> The Swiss armed forces however contributed little to the formation of the nation-state. Even after the foundation of the federation in 1848, they were left almost

cal succession of vassalage, knight forces, mercenary armies and mass armies based both on conscription and the officers' professionalization that can be observed in European history is unknown in Switzerland.<sup>120</sup>

### **The Significance of Direct Democracy**

Switzerland is a plebiscitary democracy granting its people regular participation in political matters. This political culture is different from parliamentary and presidential democracies on the continent. Manifestations of public opinion play an unusually important role in the political process.

1. Public attitudes are not only reflected in elections and surveys, but – more importantly – directly influence the process of political decision making, either in the form of political proposals made by citizens, the so-called “initiatives”, in which a group of citizens can bring about a plebiscite to change the constitution by means of collecting 100,000 signatures, or through the so-called “referendum” which requires a bill passed by the legislature to be voted on by the electorate (50,000 signatures required).<sup>121</sup>

2. Changes to the constitution proposed by parliament require a mandatory referendum. Government and parliament are thus forced to give detailed and convincing reasons for their decisions.

The far-reaching plebiscitary rights put the electorate into a position where – in theory – it could permanently veto decisions made by the government and the parliament. Votes on specific issues are therefore more important in Switzerland than elections. The executive and legislative bodies make all of their decisions anticipating the possibility of the electorate having the final say.

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completely in the hands of the cantons until 1874. Other than in most European states, where the military played an important part in the process of nation-building and became a symbol of nationhood, the Swiss militia could only partly – and not until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century – establish itself as a federal institution and symbol of national identity (Altermatt/ Bosshart-Pflugger/ Tanner, eds., 1998). Nevertheless, the fact that Switzerland is the only country in Europe where the idea of the nation-in-arms based on a citizen militia has survived up until today, has resulted in a relationship between the military and society that is in many ways special.

<sup>120</sup> In spite of this, mercenaries, through which the old, economically poor Swiss cantons supplied the land forces of most European rulers from the medieval to modern times, were the most important export articles of the old federation. In other words, old Switzerland provided the European kings' armies with Swiss soldiers but disliked mercenaries on its own territory.

<sup>121</sup> The success rate of initiatives lies at around 8%. If one takes into account the alternative proposals made by the government, mostly taking the form of a compromise, the chances for at least a partial success rise to 26% (Cf. Huber, 1999, p. 155, 266).

The plebiscitary rights include security and military issues. Since the founding of the federation, all major revisions of the so-called "military organization" – the term is used in Switzerland for the basic legislature on armed forces and their control – had to pass a public vote.

If the role of public opinion on security and foreign policies and the image of their institutions are to be studied, its plebiscitary manifestations need to be taken into account as much as impressions gained through demoscopic methods.

During the Cold War, foreign policy and the modernization of the armed forces were central issues to the public. This is reflected in the outcomes of the most significant votes on security and military politics after 1945:

1962 – refusal of an initiative to forbid Swiss nuclear armament,

1972 – refusal of two referenda demanding a limitation of armament exports

1977 – refusal of a first post-World War II attempt to introduce an alternative service based on free choice

1984 – refusal of an initiative to create a civil service for conscientious objectors on the basis of free choice

1987 – refusal of an initiative asking for an obligatory referendum on any major armament spending

1989 – refusal of an initiative demanding to abolish the army and follow a "new peace policy"

1992 – acceptance of a governmental proposal to establish a civilian service for conscientious objectors, keeping universal conscription untouched,

1993 – refusal of two initiatives wanting to limit the number of barracks and seeking to prevent the purchase of the F/A 18 military jet (1993),

1994 – refusal of the establishment of a battalion of blue helmets under the UN's or the OSCE's command, respectively (revision of the "military organization"),

1996 – refusal of a governmental attempt to limit the military competencies of the cantons, 1996 refusal of an initiative attempting to prohibit armament export again,

2000 – refusal to cut down the defense budget to half of its size of 1987,

2001 – acceptance of the arming of Swiss soldiers in peace operations and of allowing Switzerland to send troops for training reasons to foreign training facilities

2002 – refusal of a second attempt to abolish the Swiss armed forces in Peace Support Operations.

In this listing, two aspects are of particular interest. Firstly, each decade saw a higher number of votes than the previous one. The largest concentration of votes so far is to be found in the years 1990-2000.

This indicates an increase in political pressure for reforms in the security sector since the end of the Cold War. Defense budget cuts, new and foreign military assignments were at the forefront. Secondly, the list of referenda in the field of national security reveals a clear tendency. As a rule, public opinion, i.e. the electorate, has proved to be more status quo-oriented than the parliament and the government, in other words to be the most conservative element in the process of decision making concerning issues of national security. Referenda of the right-wing groups such as the one to stop the creation of a UN battalion in 1994 or the curtailment of cantonal military entitlements had a better chance to be accepted than those of the left. All initiatives by the latter attempting to drastically reduce defense spending were turned down. This has to do in part with the fact that the government and parliament have by themselves, with the consent of the electorate, initiated a process of gradual reduction of defense spending since 1990. Among other measures, the size of the militia was reduced to half its original size (see below). Moreover, as a consequence of the changed geopolitical situation, the defense budget underwent significant step-by-step cuts from around 8 billion Swiss Francs (5 billion \$) in 1990 to around 5,4 billion Swiss Francs (3,4 billion \$) in 2001, thereby complying with strong public pressure.

Nevertheless, this list of refusals makes clear how skeptical the Swiss public is towards radical steps. Larger military assignments abroad are turned down as incompatible with neutrality. In addition, all attempts to limit autonomous defense endeavors are faced with opposition. The principles of neutrality and militia force remained untouched in all votes during the last decade. Real innovations in security policy usually take several attempts before they are accepted. The approval of Swiss participation in peace missions, which was de facto given only in May 2001 when the armament of military personnel abroad was approved, may serve as an example of this. Only in 1994, the public turned down the creation of a blue helmet battalion. The Swiss voters have so far been reluctant to acknowledge and consequently transform into institutional reforms the security situation, which has changed since 1990.

### **Neutrality as National Identity – the Opening of the Country as a Dilemma**

The image of security institutions in Switzerland is, as everywhere, closely linked to the development of the national threat and the country's international position. As already mentioned, Switzerland is one of the few countries in Europe to be spared of wars over the last 150 years. Unlike most European countries, where wars caused crucial breaks in both political and military tradition influencing the image of

security and defense, the country did not experience such ruptures. Nevertheless, the two World Wars left deep traces in the country's national identity and public opinion that are still present. They reassured the Swiss of their opinion that the existence of their small Alpine republic could be guaranteed only if they were able to avoid areas of tension in regard to changing European interests. Neutrality, practiced and internationally guaranteed for more than 200 years, has become the constant basis of Swiss foreign and security policy. Internally, the dangers of ethical fragmentation have additionally strengthened neutrality, which has been practiced since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In a nation linguistically segmented and divided by confessional and cultural differences, neutrality has served as an important agent of national cohesion. It prevented the linguistic groups from turning away from the domestic focus towards their cultural super-communities (e.g. the French speaking Swiss towards France, the German speaking Swiss towards Germany, the Italian speaking Swiss towards Italy). In practicing its neutrality, Switzerland has therefore always stood aside politically and refrained from joining any defense alliances. Clinging to a policy of "splendid isolation" in matters of foreign and security policy seems to have guaranteed security on a foreign as well as on a domestic level. It is only by grasping this double function of neutrality *that the high esteem, still held among the Swiss public, can be understood*. Switzerland joined the United Nations only recently in March 2002 after a referendum won by a close margin.<sup>122</sup>

#### REFORMS OF THE SECURITY SECTOR AND REEVALUATION OF NEUTRALITY AFTER THE COLD WAR

With the end of the Cold War and intensified European integration, key values of Swiss foreign and security policy that had been maintained for centuries, became obsolete within a few years. Switzerland's neutrality during the Cold War seemed sensible, especially with regard to its traditional role of an international third party-mediator. Today, however, it finds itself in the midst of a new Europe – a Europe whose old patterns of conflict have completely dissolved; a Europe in which the nations are preparing to form into a federation. What direction is Switzerland to take in a situation in which the surrounding environment becomes more and more "Swiss like"? It seems

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<sup>122</sup> The adherence to the United Nations implied a change of the Swiss constitution. The latter does not only require a majority of the electorate, but also of the cantons (a principle of double majority in order to prevent the populous cantons from dominating the small ones). Though joining the UN was favoured by a total of 55% of the electorate, only the slightest majority of cantons were achieved (12:11).

unavoidable that Switzerland's new place within Europe and the world has to be redefined before its security and defense policy can be adapted to it. As far as such a new orientation is concerned, Switzerland is currently experiencing a crisis. The attempt of the government to approach the EU by joining the European Economic Space (EES)<sup>123</sup> was rejected in December 1992, and a second attempt to join the EU by starting negotiations was stopped in March 2001. The voters accepted only bilateral contracts with the EU in 2001. The forces working in favor of the country's opening on one hand, and the neutralist ones on the other, are equal in strength and obstruct each other (see below). Nevertheless, the government and parliament have changed security and defense policies twice in the past few years in favor of more international cooperation and an adjustment to European trends in security policy. A first step was taken in 1990; a second revision of the concept of security and defense policy, including the downsizing and restructuring of the militia forces, is currently under way:

- *Security policy 1990 and army reform 1995*: While acknowledging changes in the political environment, especially in respect to diminished military threats, the first post-Cold War report on security policy – the government's white book on defense policy – was still hesitant to depart from the traditionally autonomous defense policy and from neutrality. However, in view of the declining threat, the militia was downsized from 600'000 to 350'000 persons in 1995. Yet, a reform of doctrine and of the conception of the armed forces did not take place. In particular, the concept of an autonomous national defense based on a large mass army remained untouched.

- *Security policy 2000 and army reform XXI (scheduled for 2003)*: The government's recent report on security policy (SIPOL 2000)<sup>124</sup> marks a first, if only gradual, departure from the traditional status quo of a purely autonomous defense and military policy. The report further endorses the government's intention to finally open Switzerland's security and defense policies, an intention that was already displayed in a moderate fashion when the country joined the "Partnership for Peace" (PfP) in 1995 and when it founded the three internationally oriented institutes working on security policy in Geneva (Centre for Security Policy, Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, Centre for Hu-

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<sup>123</sup> Joining the EES would have given Switzerland access to the European common market (4 economic liberties) without having to become a full member of the EU. Norway and Liechtenstein are associated with the EU through the EES.

<sup>124</sup> Bericht des Bundesrates an die Bundesversammlung über die Sicherheitspolitik der Schweiz (SIPOL B 2000), June 7, 1999. Bern: Eidgenössische Druckmittelzentrale.

manitarian Demining). It includes steps towards much smaller armed forces based on standby elements and a partial professionalization (Haltiner, in: Haltiner, Klein eds. 2002).

Sending a small, unarmed medical unit to Namibia and the Western Sahara in the early nineties under the mandate of UNO emphasized this change of government policy. A second step was taken by deploying Swiss peace soldiers to Bosnia. In 1999, the Swiss armed forces took part in the first humanitarian flights to Albania and Macedonia and then sent a reinforced, non-armed KFOR military unit to Kosovo for logistic assignments.

But despite this move towards increased international cooperation in security policy, in the near future both the government and the parliament, anticipating the rather conservative public opinion, will stick to traditional principles:

- The country's neutrality is continued through binding international law. Switzerland will not join any military alliances (e.g. NATO) in the near future.
- The constitution will not be revised as far as the reorganization of the armed forces is concerned. This means that both the militia system and universal conscription are further upheld.
- The country will only take part in military peace support and humanitarian operations when there is a UN mandate to do so. The participation in peace enforcement operations is ruled out explicitly.

Ultimately, these three limitations leave little room for fundamentally redefining Swiss security policy in the years to come. According to the government, larger steps, such as far-reaching peace support engagements or the abolition of universal conscription will not be issues on the political agenda. The reform of the armed forces will come into effect in 2003, its label being "Army XXI". The army's three assignments, namely defense, subsidiary support in domestic issues, such as police operations or rescue missions, and the support of peace operations abroad, remain unaltered.

#### TRENDS IN THE PUBLIC IMAGE OF NEUTRALITY AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS A POST-COLD WAR REDEFINITION OF SWISS FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY

The reactions of the political parties to the governmental plans to redefine Swiss foreign and security policy, as outlined above, are ambiguous. While right wing organizations demand strict observation of neutrality and the upholding of a classic mass army solely serving the purpose of defending the country's territory according to the "nation



in arms"-principle, the political left wants to join the EU and calls for the abolishment of universal conscription in favor of a small all-volunteer force that would mainly serve to take part in peace support operations.

Survey trends show that the average public opinion remains critical and vigilant towards the government's cautious attempts at opening the country's security policies. The military peace operations as carried out since 1996, as well as the moderate participation within KFOR are supported by a majority of the public.<sup>125</sup> But despite the cautious approval of a more active foreign and security policy, surveys still reveal strong reservations concerning a more aggressive opening of the country (Haltiner et. al. 2002):

- According to surveys taken since 1993, the accession to NATO would have no chance of being approved by the public. Even small steps in that direction do not win the support of a majority of the people.<sup>126</sup> For that reason, the government's decision to join the PfP has always been criticized mainly by the parties of the right. Increased military cooperation with foreign countries, for instance training or mutual assistance in case of natural disasters, is approved of only if it is not perceived to limit the country's capacity to act autonomously.

- Public approval of the EU has not been stable since its lowest point, when voters rejected EES in 1992.<sup>127</sup> It is influenced rather strongly by current issues between the EU and Switzerland and therefore fluctuates markedly. Successful negotiations and a European "daily business" attitude will gradually lead to an increase in acceptance; failed negotiations and hegemonic display of power on the European part (e.g. the EU-reaction to the right-wing coalition in Vienna, the advent of the Euro, pressure exerted on Switzerland to abolish its banking secrecy) will trigger deeply rooted anti-hegemonic reflexes. Even though the people approved economically far-reaching bilateral treaties with the EU<sup>128</sup> in May

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<sup>125</sup> The "Security" surveys show an approval of the Swiss foreign military engagements by at least two thirds of the questioned people since 1996. In 2002, a clear majority of 58% still continues to support Swiss UN troops, but there is a considerable decline in comparison with 2001 (-10%). See Haltiner, Wenger, Bennett, Szvircsev, 1999-2002.

<sup>126</sup> Haltiner, Wenger, Bennett, Szvircsev, 2002, pp. 94. Joining NATO was never favored by more than 30% of persons surveyed since 1993. "Intensified cooperation" with NATO is slightly more popular, but the acceptance rate has always been less than 50%, except in 1999 after the air strikes against Serbia.

<sup>127</sup> See footnote 3.

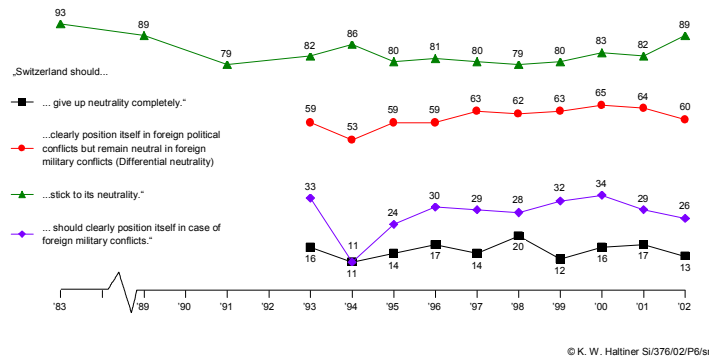
<sup>128</sup> They include a limited participation of Switzerland in the European Common Market.

2002, an initiative forcing the government to negotiate the terms of joining the EU was clearly rejected only shortly before that, in March 2002. In February 2002, only four out of ten Swiss were in favor of joining the EU. Current trends show diminishing support again after a phase of rising approval in 1998 and 1999, when around 50% of the Swiss voters were willing to join the EU (Haltiner, Wenger, Bennett, Szvircsev, 2002 pp. 92). Joining the creation of European armed forces is out of the question for the Swiss public.

- Similar fluctuations in public opinion, depending on current events, are to be found in the public image of UNO. In 1990/91, after the end of the Cold War, approval rates of UNO increased significantly, but plummeted again after certain failures such as UNPROFOR in Yugoslavia. The latter is likely to have contributed to the aforementioned rejection of the creation of a Swiss battalion of blue-helmets in 1994. The close decision in favor of joining UNO in March 2002 is not exactly a sign of widespread cosmopolitan enthusiasm, either.

Deeply rooted ambiguities regarding the question of whether the country should be further opened or maintain its high degree of autonomy make it difficult to predict how the Swiss public will respond to specific events relevant to foreign and security policy in the nearer future. The public opinion keeps changing, seemingly without clear direction, according to international events. Undoubtedly, this has to do with the fact that neutrality and national autonomy are principles still regarded as highly legitimate. In the long-term trend, neutrality is supported by a remarkably stable 80 percent of the Swiss people (*graph 1*). A majority of Swiss citizens is convinced that, due to its neutral status, the country was spared of the great wars of the last two centuries. Clearly, an allegedly successful policy principle, which has been settling in people's minds for more than 200 years, cannot be erased in a decade's time. Over time, it has gained the status of a symbol of national identification. Notwithstanding the changed political situation in Europe and the rest of the world, with regard to the position of the country in the world, the myth of neutrality still seems to determine Swiss public opinion more than anything else. The strong general support for the principle of neutrality should not, however, be confused with an indifferent approval of all its functions. A relative majority wants to limit its purpose to foreign military conflicts (*graph 1*). Yet neutrality remains the bottleneck as far as the country's international cooperation is concerned.

Graph 1: The public image of Swiss neutrality (Agreement in percent)



The ongoing public debate on a new foreign and security policy and the reform of the armed forces mirrors Switzerland's search for a new position in Europe and in the world. In a direct democracy, decisions require a broad consensus within the population. Achieving that kind of consensus will take time.

## THE ROLE OF UNIVERSAL CONSCRIPTION AND THE MILITIA FORCES

A third Swiss peculiarity is also deeply rooted in the historical conditions that have shaped Swiss political culture. No other country, with the possible exception of Israel, has ever so rigorously enforced the constitutional principle of compulsory military service for all men as modern Switzerland (article 18 of the constitution of 1874, article 59 of the 1999 update, respectively). In his study which still is one of the most readable descriptions of the Swiss militia, the US-journalist John McPhee concluded in 1984 (p. 6) somewhat ironically: "Switzerland does not have an army, Switzerland is an army". He was thereby quoting an old Swiss saying. Individuals freed from service for medical reasons must pay a compensation tax. The several attempts to establish an alternative service for conscientious objectors before 1990 failed because of the extensive interpretation of the military burden sharing in Swiss public opinion (Haltiner in Moskos/Chambers eds.

1993, p.143).<sup>129</sup> While today's law explicitly allows for a civilian service, it is still considered to be the exception to the rule.<sup>130</sup>

- Two civil-military parameters laid down by the Swiss constitution of 1872 (article 58.1 of the 1999 update), namely the "prohibition of a regular army" on the one hand and a "compulsory military service" on the other, allow for no other military system than the present militia force. This renders Switzerland the only country in Europe having a classic militia army as its regular armed forces. A militia consists, by definition, of non-permanent mobilization-based forces. Its consequences are:

- Militia officers and militia non-commissioned officers instead of professional or contract soldiers,

- a system of annual or biannual refresher courses after a short basic training at the age of 20 instead of an uninterrupted single service which would meet the needs of a standby force,

- a part-time soldiery for most of the male population during a long period of life,

- a high Military Participation Ratio (MPR) compared to other European countries as a consequence of the extensive interpretation of conscription.

Undoubtedly, the most salient characteristic by international comparison is that the Swiss militia does without a specific military functional elite on a professional basis. The roughly 800 professional officers and 1000 professional non-commissioned officers serve as instructors and not as leaders to the militia. *They do not make up a critical size and are – due to their function as instructors – not defined by the system.* Therefore, the military leadership system remains in civil hands. The egalitarian nature of the country's cooperative past led to a traditional distrust of a professional caste of officers and of professionalization of the forces in general that is still present today (Haltiner 2002a). The tradition of the citizen forces has become part of Switzerland's national identity and political culture as well. However, the close connection of the civil and military social elements calls for a high degree of acceptance and even social prestige of a militia career. To be able to function, the militia is directly dependent on the voluntary military participation of the civil elite. A military career demands considerable voluntary service in addition to the mandatory minimum. Such a commitment is undertaken only as long as it is

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<sup>129</sup> In two referenda in 1977 and 1984, clear majorities voted down alternative models of service because the electorate could not be convinced that the people liable for alternative service would have to carry a burden equal to the one carried by military draftees.

<sup>130</sup> Persons who wish to object and give credible reasons for this before a commission can do civil service. Its duration is one and a half times longer than the regular military service.

closely linked to high social and civil prestige. In the case of an increasing lack of volunteers as militia NCOs and officers, the military leadership system would have to be professionalized much in the same way as in other standard European military organizations.<sup>131</sup>

### Public Opinion on the Armed Forces

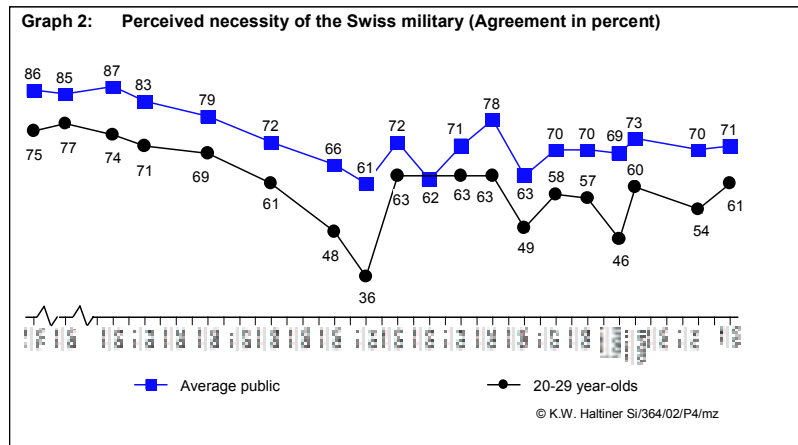
Until the seventies, the militia was an undisputed ideal of Swiss citizens. As long as statements in the vein of McPhee's (see above) were regarded – not only in Switzerland – as self-evident, the military's social prestige was high, its social position central (graph 2). Because of the centuries-old tradition of the militia in the Swiss cantons, the symbolic functions normally assumed by citizens' armies could develop early and strongly in the relationship between the military and society. These functions included the role of the military as the "school of the nation", "the rite de passage" to manhood, the symbol of civic honor and national identity.<sup>132</sup> The militia military not only served as an instrument of national security but also as an agent for national cohesion in ethnically heterogeneous Switzerland. Ever since the establishment of the militia, the degree of military participation has determined the degree of civil integration and proximity to the social and political core of Swiss society. As John McPhee commented, "If you understand the New York Yacht Club, the Cosmos Club, the Century Club, you would understand the Swiss Army" (1984, p. 46). *So few were the conscientious objectors that the attempts at introducing alternative civil services through political initiatives were turned down by the voters.* Finding volunteers for higher military positions hardly posed any problems, as officer positions in the militia were highly prestigious within the economy and society. This close and supportive relationship between society and the military reached its climax during World War II, when Switzerland was surrounded by fascist governments and was virtually left on its own. At that time the "army myth" crystallized, and shaped public opinion until the 1980s.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> In fact, the planned army reform (Army XXI) aims to solve this problem by introducing contract NCOs and officers. Militia cadres are partially replaced by professional soldiers.

<sup>132</sup> In 1983, 56% of the surveyed citizens agreed that the militia served as an agent of national cohesion. In 1998, the persons agreeing to the same statement amounted to 47%. The "rite de passage"-function of the military to manhood was agreed on by 52% in 1976, by 41% in 1983 and by 33% in 1995 (Haltiner 1998c, p. 66).

<sup>133</sup> In 1983, for example, 61% of the Swiss population were of the opinion that Switzerland had been spared World War II mainly because of its ready military defence. However, until 2001, that percentage had decreased to 38%, mainly due to



During the rapid change of values in the 1970s and 1980s, the social position of the military was challenged for the first time. The movement of 1968 reached the Swiss youth with some delay but with considerable power and resulted in unrest among young recruits in the barracks and anti-military manifestations at Swiss universities. It surprised the people, the media, politicians, and especially the military. The first immediate reaction was surprise, disbelief, and a kind of helplessness. Only hesitantly did the political and military establishment start to realize that the wave of anti-militarism carried by the youth-movement was met with a considerable response in Switzerland as well. Conscientious objection and criticism of the military rose during the 1970s and became a topic for the media and soon for the *classe politique* as well. The militia began to lose its former central position as an essential symbol of civic participation. In public opinion, it began to be viewed increasingly as a necessary evil (Haltiner 1985). Especially for the young, the militia became the preferred target of political opposition, embodying traditional, anti-modern Switzerland. Soldier unions triggered barracks-riots and symbolically questioned the militia, declaring it an institution of the bourgeois elite.

The 1980s brought a second wave of unrest to the army and the question about its function in Swiss security policy was raised again. The peace movement developed an enormous mobilization capacity in Switzerland even though as a small neutral nation it was not directly affected by NATO's decision to introduce new short-range missiles. Young socialists founded the "Group Switzerland Without Army"

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public debate on the allegedly supportive attitude of Switzerland towards Nazi-Germany when the country was surrounded by fascist Europe from 1940 till 1944 (Haltiner/Wenger/Bennett/Szvircev, 2001, pp 97).

(Gruppe Schweiz ohne Armee – GSoA) and launched an initiative to abolish the Swiss military. Simply the idea of doing away with the army carried additional heat into the discussion about the citizen army. The main criticism of the GSoA was that the militia system and the doctrine of "comprehensive defense" enhanced the *militarizing* of society. At 36% yes-votes it accomplished a political success in 1989 that had not been expected by official Switzerland. Analyses show that a majority of the 20- to 29-year-olds approved the referendum.

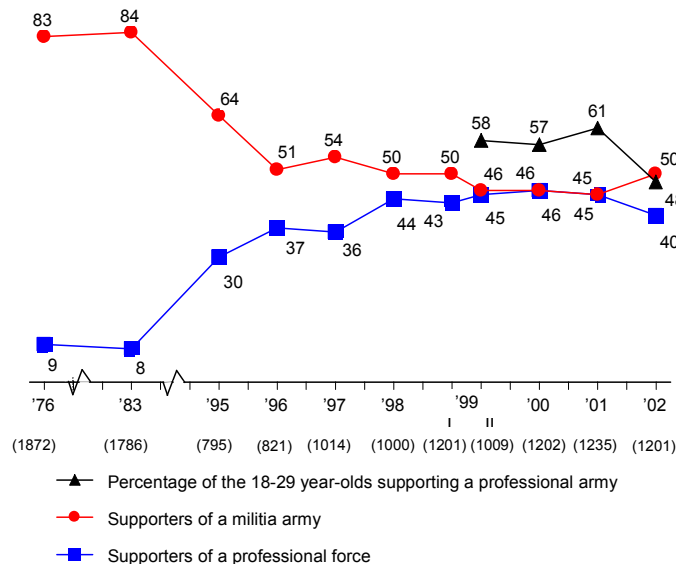
The plebiscite unveiled unexpectedly harsh criticism of the militia system. It signified the violation of a taboo even before the end of the Cold War, since, for the first time ever, it was possible to question the citizen army and universal conscription. Army and conscription were no longer indisputable political ideals. This development is strikingly illustrated by the declining acceptance of the Swiss armed forces during the eighties in survey trends ([graph 3](#)). In 1992, a civil service for conscientious objectors was proposed by parliament and government and finally accepted in a referendum. At the same time, a growing lack of commitment to the militia army was becoming perceivable. The military career lost its attractiveness among the young elites. In addition, medical reasons were becoming a more common way of dropping out of the army. It currently applies to more than a third of the conscripts each year. This process of de-symbolization is an example of what Max Weber called disenchantment (*Entzauberung*) by modernization ("modernisierung").

In the post-Cold War period, public opinion has changed once more. Its focus has moved away from the defense institutions to the remodeling of Swiss foreign and security policy. The military is less of a target of internal political criticism and argument today than in the 1980s. In surveys, its acceptance rate oscillates at around 70 percent ([graph 2](#)), although the social and political valuation of the role of the military has changed. A revival of the army-abolition initiative of 1989 in December 2001 was a complete failure. At a minimal turnout, only 22% percent voted in favor of it and other than in 1989, it did not receive the approval of a majority of the youngest group of voters, even though it enjoyed above-average sympathy among them (Haltiner, Bennett 2002). It may well be that the shocking terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 contributed to this clear rejection. But the change of civil-military relations is more deeply rooted. Today's attitude is characterized by a kind of apathy. Individualization and the pluralization of life styles are eroding the prerequisites of the communitarian militia culture. Although most people realize the necessity for national defense, they wish to have nothing to do with it personally. This "without-me" attitude manifests itself in the increasing attempts to avoid individual conscription with the help of a medical certificate and in the increasing difficulty of recruiting voluntary militia NCOs

and officers in sufficient numbers and quality. Today, there is a significant lack of young militia cadres. For this reason alone, a reevaluation of the organization and recruiting structure of the Swiss militia seems advisable. Since the mid-eighties the number of supporters of an all-volunteer force has been increasing almost continuously (graph 2), whereas the acceptance of the conscription-based militia has been decreasing. In 2002, four out of ten of the persons surveyed favored a professional army; in the 1970s and 1980s only about 15 percent did so (graph 3). According to the surveys, mainly people who are in favor of the country's intensified international cooperation and demand a reduction of defense spending question the militia system.<sup>134</sup>

**Graph 3: Militia army versus professional forces**  
(Figures in percent)

„Do you believe that the militia army, as we have it in Switzerland, can secure our national defense in the future or are you of the opinion that a professional army would be better for us?“



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Thus, Switzerland, a classic example of the nation-in-arms principle, shows the same tendencies as the rest of Europe, where conscription is in decline (Haltiner 2002a). It cannot be ruled out that main-

<sup>134</sup> Cf. Haltiner, Wenger, Bennett, Szvircsev, 2001. Sicherheit 2001. Zürich: Militärische Führungsschule an der ETH Zürich und Forschungsstelle für Sicherheitspolitik und Konfliktanalyse der ETH Zürich, p. 137.



taining conscription and the militia system will increasingly become an object of public debate and even referenda over the next years. The political left has already made clear its sympathy for a volunteer force, and another round of conscription abolishment in the neighboring countries of Germany and Austria could further strengthen the proponents of an all-volunteer army. Moreover, the future of the militia system is not only depending on public opinion, but will also be determined by its efficiency with regard to new military assignments and new technology.

## CONCLUSION

Due to its political culture of direct democracy and its national defense based on the "nation-in-arms" principle, Switzerland undoubtedly belongs to the group of European countries, in which the institutions of national security have long been held in unusually high social estimation. But it is also an impressive example of how thoroughly within the last twenty years, the process of modernization has changed the socio-economic prerequisites for an exclusively national, autonomous defense and a pure militia force.

The disenchantment of the military as a stronghold of national identification, and its new image as a mere instrument of foreign and security policy needing to be optimized, is a process which began long before the end of the Cold War, but gained momentum in the nineties. The end of the Cold War has, however, not resulted in a change of paradigm as in some other countries (e.g. Belgium, The Netherlands, Sweden) where public opinion on national security and the armed forces has made a complete turnaround within a short period of time. In Switzerland, as compared to most other European countries, the public assessment of the institutions of security is much more influenced by domestic, primarily socio-political aspects than by strategic and international ones. However, there are indications that the country is adapting to European trends of new security and defense structures, albeit slowly and cautiously. In particular, Switzerland's centuries-old neutrality, which has become a binding tradition, poses problems. It has gradually become obsolete in a Europe that is unifying in exactly the same bottom-up way as Switzerland once did. While the country's political elite fears international isolation and is ready to gradually give up neutrality, the doctrine "never change a winning horse" is still very popular with the people, despite the fundamentally changed post-Cold War situation. Therefore, European integration and transnational cooperation in the security sector pose a greater challenge to Switzerland than to most other European countries, including post-communist ones. Switzerland's search for a new national identity, as well as new international orientation has only just begun. As

direct democracy works slowly, this process may take some time but will possibly be characterized by the proverbial Swiss solidity.

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### **Abstract**

Due to its national defense based on the "nation-in-arms" principle, Switzerland undoubtedly belongs to the group of European countries in which the institutions of national security have long been held in high estimation, and have always had a great social significance. But the country is also an impressive example of how thoroughly the process of modernization has changed the social and military prerequisites for an exclusively autonomous defense and a pure militia force.

There are strong indications of the country adapting to European trends of new security and defense structures, albeit slowly and cautiously, and in spite of the fact that the rather conservative public opinion may currently still be opposed to them.



# Public Image of Security, Defence and Military in Poland

Agnieszka Gogolewska

## TRANSFORMATION OF SECURITY

Since 1989, the security and defence sector in Poland has undergone a deep transformation, parallel to the unprecedented transition of the state from the communist system to representative democracy. Polish membership in NATO is the most conspicuous symbol of the major change that has taken place in Poland, the real scope of reform, however, has been much broader than the mere shift from Warsaw Pact to North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

It was not easy for the army to understand and accept its new place in the changed political environment. The communist legacy caused many problems. Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone noted back in the 1980s that the Polish armed forces were always a "schizophrenic army, ashamed of its role as a tool of foreign hegemony and responsive to the strong pull of national traditions".<sup>135</sup> Consequently, the image of what emerged from the years of communist rule was not clear to the society: for some people the military were the bearer of national tradition<sup>136</sup> and a trustworthy institution<sup>137</sup>, for others a mere remnant of *ancien regime* and a potential threat to democracy. Among the latter was the first civilian Minister of Defence in Poland, Jan Parys. His aggressive anticommunist posture combined with obsessive distrust of the military and fear for his personal safety compromised both the idea of civilian control of the military and the plans for screening. Jan Parys was eventually dismissed after having denounced an unspecified 'plot of generals' at the end of 1992, yet the memory of the Parys' affair haunted civil-military relations in Poland for a long time.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, Christopher D. Jones, John Jaworski, Ivan Sylvain, Zoltan Barany, *Warsaw Pact: Question of Cohesion. Phase II, Vol. 1. The Greater Socialist Army: Integration and Reliability* (Ottawa: Department of Defence, Canada, 1984), p. 205.

<sup>136</sup> Romuald Szeremietiew, *Czy mogliśmy przetrwać? Polska a Niemcy w latach 1918 – 1939*. (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Bellona, 1994), pp. 292 – 293.

<sup>137</sup> Janusz Onyszkiewicz, *Ze szczytów do NATO*, (Warszawa: Bellona, 1999), p. 100 – 103.

<sup>138</sup> Onyszkiewicz, *Ze szczytów...*, pp. 143 – 144.

After such a difficult start, the armed forces found it hard to accept new rules of functioning in a democratic environment. The then Chief of General Staff, gen. Tadeusz Wilecki, pushed for a greater direct political involvement. This tendency, backed by President Wałęsa, provoked a number of political scandals, the greatest of which was the infamous "Drawsko dinner" in 1994.<sup>139</sup> Political repercussion of that affair threatened the process of Polish integration with NATO and this fact finally provoked a more robust counter-reaction of the politicians. A series of dismissals of military commanders and the legal reform carried out initiated in 1995, successfully introduced minimal standards of democratic civilian control of the military in Poland and enabled the process of NATO enlargement to go ahead.<sup>140</sup>

At that time, the public image of the place and role of the military in a democratic state and the understanding of those issues by the professional military were divergent and largely contradictory. Political involvement of the military was strongly disapproved of by the society in the first place.<sup>141</sup> The Political elite and the public shared the conviction that the role of the military should be confined to the provision of external security. The legal acts created in the aftermath of the Drawsko affair so defined the role of the military. The Constitution of 1997 described the role of the Polish Armed Forces as that of the protection of the independence of the state, integrity of its territory and the maintenance of the safety and inviolability of the borders. The Next paragraph of the same article declared that the armed forces were politically neutral and remained under democratic civilian control, which was a direct corollary of earlier scandals in civil-military relations in Poland.<sup>142</sup> The recently adopted Law on the State of Natural Disasters<sup>143</sup> made the only up-to-date exception to the general rule of not using the army for domestic reasons and allowed the local governor to use armed forces in the case of natural disaster. Still, however, it is socially unacceptable to implement army troops in the role typically understood of as a police task.

All said, the post-communist transition brought about a relative lowering of interest in army affairs and a decline of public interest in

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<sup>139</sup> At the informal gathering at Drawsko training grounds, the highest military commanders at the presence of President Lech Wałęsa took an informal vote of no confidence to the civilian minister of defence, Piotr Kołodziejczyk.

<sup>140</sup> Andrew A. Michta, *The Soldier-Citizen: the Politics of the Polish Army After Communism*. (Houndsmill, Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1997), pp. 35 – 43.

<sup>141</sup> Jadwiga Staniszkis, "Brakuje głosu wojskowych", *Polska Zbrojna*, No 5, January 2001, p. 5.

<sup>142</sup> Article 26, Constitution of the Republic of Poland, 4 April 1997.

<sup>143</sup><sup>143</sup> *Ustawa o stanie klęski żywiołowej*, 18 April 2002, *Dziennik Ustaw* No 62, poz. 558.

external security, particularly since the Polish accession to NATO. For the great majority of Polish people, domestic security is the major cause for concern.<sup>144</sup> Surveys showed that provision of citizens' security was regarded as the most important responsibility of the state.<sup>145</sup>

## PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR MEMBERSHIP OF NATO

Among the three candidate countries, in Poland the idea of integration into NATO enjoyed the greatest public support throughout the expansion process. From May 1992, when the idea was first investigated in an opinion poll, until 1998, popular support was constantly on the rise. In 1992, only 35 % of Poles were in favour of NATO membership, but a year later, already more than half of the adult population supported the process (57 %). Public support peaked in 1998 and in that year 73 % regarded Polish membership in NATO as the only viable security option for Poland.<sup>146</sup>

It may, therefore, look slightly surprising that, as the moment of accession approached, public support decreased and the numbers oscillated between 60 % and 67 %.<sup>147</sup> The situation becomes clear, however, if one remembers the dynamics of the expansion process. Until 1998, the future of NATO expansion was uncertain and hence, the public showed more concern. The apprehension was additionally fuelled by frequent references to the 'security vacuum', which, the political elite insisted, was the only alternative to Poland's membership in NATO. After the Madrid summit in 1998, when the prospective membership of the three new countries was officially announced, the tension surrounding the issue decreased and so did the public interest in membership.

Nevertheless, an overwhelming majority of the Polish had an emotional attitude. Shortly before the accession ceremony in Brussels, 32 % admitted that they expected the event to be a turning point in Polish history and further 45 % declared that, in their opinion, the membership should be of great significance for Poland.

## HIGH HOPES, LOW AWARENESS

Public support for membership in NATO remained high throughout the pre-accession period, yet there was little public discussion re-

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<sup>144</sup> "Czy w Polsce żyje się bezpiecznie?", *Komunikat CBOS*, February 2000.

<sup>145</sup> "Obowiązki państwa wobec obywatela i obywatela wobec państwa", *Komunikat CBOS*, December 1999.

<sup>146</sup> "Polska w NATO", *Komunikat CBOS*, March 1999.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*

garding future Polish obligations and responsibilities as a member of the world's most powerful security alliance. Similarly, the public awareness of the nature and functioning of the Alliance was small. Various analyses concentrated on the geopolitical and historical dimensions of the integration. In the eyes of the public, the accession to the Western security alliance offered a chance to break the ominous historical pattern of dependency on either of the dominant neighbouring powers, Russia or Germany, and to become part of the free and secure world. Such a move away from Russia and into the Western zone was perceived as a genuine change of paradigm in contemporary international relations.

The historical perspective left little room for public discussion of the responsibilities of membership and the limitations that such an integration would pose on Polish sovereign foreign and security policy. As a result, the consciousness regarding immediate and long-term consequences of integration was low. It was only after the accession that, in the context of the NATO campaign in Kosovo, that the public finally reflected on some possible after-effects of membership and began to have 'second thoughts'. All told, nevertheless, from 1993, until the present, the level of public support for NATO in Poland never fell below 50 % of the adult population.

So what did the Poles hope for in connection with the membership? First of all, they expected the integration to strengthen the international position of Poland (57 %) and to contribute to better peace and stability in Europe (57 %).<sup>148</sup> However, in the period directly preceding accession more people began to think that membership might increase the probability of Polish involvement in an armed conflict (16 % in January 1998, 27 % in February 1999).<sup>149</sup>

Future NATO security guarantees were the most important aspects of membership. The majority of Polish people believed that NATO would guarantee peace and security for Poland. They also demonstrated a relatively high degree of confidence in the Alliance – on the eve of accession a total of 62 % expressed the conviction that Polish security interests would not be discriminated against the interests of 'old' NATO members.<sup>150</sup> Fewer people thought that the Alliance would also guarantee the independence of Poland. In 1998, the record year of public support for NATO, only 56 % of the public was convinced that, along with peace and security, the Alliance would guarantee Polish independence. In February 1999, this view was shared by only 41 % as against 42 % who believed that membership in

<sup>148</sup> "W przeddzień przystąpienia do NATO", *Komunikat CBOS*, February 1999.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.* This could be, at least partly, attributed to the developing conflict in Kosovo.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*



NATO would be just another form of subordination to a foreign power. Interestingly, one third of those who saw membership as yet another form of subordination still supported the move.<sup>151</sup> It may suggest that, a certain part of the population would have preferred another security option, yet faced with the choice of 'security vacuum', or subordination to Russia or to the Western powers, they chose the last alternative.

As the moment of accession approached, questions in opinion polls became more specific. The results of various surveys showed that the high public support for membership in NATO had, in fact, ambiguous foundations. And so, the polls returned only a tentative 'yes' to a possible stationing of NATO troops on Polish territory (51 % in March 1999) and a weak approval for the participation of Polish troops in military operations within the framework of NATO forces in conflict regions abroad (55 %). On the question of placing nuclear weapons in Poland the reply was a firm 'no' (83 % against).<sup>152</sup> All in all, public backing for specific aspects of being part of the Alliance was definitely lower than for the membership itself.

The first test of loyalty came very soon. Poland became a member of the Alliance in March 1999, and already in the same month NATO began the bombing campaign in Kosovo. Nobody could predict the reaction of the public in Poland. But, a survey carried out a month after the initiation of the Kosovo campaign, demonstrated a relatively high degree of support for the operation – 55 % in favour, and only 31 % against the operation. There were, however, sharp limitations to the approval. Only 36 % allowed the possibility of a land operation in Kosovo, and only 37 % were prepared to send Polish troops into the conflict zone.<sup>153</sup> After the operation had ended, public support for NATO policy in the Balkans rose to a record level (59 % thought that the operation was effective), despite the fact that Polish people were sceptical about the prospects for lasting peace in Kosovo as a result of the operation. Only 23 % of Polish believed that the campaign would lead to permanent peace, and more than half expressed a conviction that the hostilities had ended temporarily.<sup>154</sup> Additionally, the number of people generally in favour of Polish membership in NATO returned to the highest pre-accession level. Obviously the public found it appealing to belong to the successful party.

NATO military intervention in the Balkans was a turning point in the public opinion of the Alliance. First, people saw the Alliance get-

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<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>152</sup> "Polska w NATO" ..

<sup>153</sup> "Opinie o interwencji w Jugosławii", *Komunikat CBOS*, 22-27 April 1999.

<sup>154</sup> "Opinie o sytuacji w Kosowie po zaprzestaniu bombardowań", *Komunikat CBOS*, 16 – 22 June 1999.

ting involved in unprecedented military intervention, without a mandate for the UN or OSCE and supported it. Secondly, a surprising 49 %<sup>155</sup> backed the government's decision to send Polish troops to the region of recent conflict as part of KFOR. Prior to the Kosovo operation, the public in Poland was prepared to accept only such foreign deployment of Polish troops that would be connected with classical peacekeeping. The case of Kosovo demonstrated that Polish society was quickly learning the difference between being part of the Warsaw Pact and a member of NATO and that it had begun to understand the full extent of the responsibilities that came with said membership.

### OPERATION IN AFGHANISTAN

The results of the 'lessons learned' from Kosovo became evident after September 11<sup>th</sup>. Generally speaking, the acceptance of the offensive campaign in Afghanistan came sooner, more easily and was greater than in the case of Kosovo. Regardless of media broadcasting about bombs going astray and on civilian casualties in Afghanistan, public support for the operation was rising parallel to the development of the operation and, in April 2002, reached 75 %.<sup>156</sup> Less consolidated was the support for the use of Polish troops. The previously strong opposition to deployment of Polish forces in conflict zones had already been alleviated by the successful participation of Polish soldiers in KFOR in Kosovo. However, this 'softening' did not imply permission to deploy troops in every NATO operation. Immediately after September 11<sup>th</sup>, the shock and anger united people in support for any kind of anti-terrorist action and 77 % declared that Poland should be prepared to fulfil its obligations as a member of the Alliance and join NATO in military operations if the organisation so decided. Later, the emotions subsided and, when the plans to deploy 300 Polish soldiers in Afghanistan were finally unveiled by the government, only 43 % supported direct Polish involvement in Afghanistan.<sup>157</sup> Interestingly, after the deployment had taken place, public support went back up and, in April 2002, reached 57 %.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> "Polscy żołnierze w Kosowie", *Komunikat CBOS*, 7 – 13 July 1999.

<sup>156</sup> "O przynależności Polski do NATO i obecności polskich żołnierzy w Afganistanie", *Komunikat CBOS*, April 2002.

<sup>157</sup> "Afganistan: wyjazd polskich żołnierzy i opinie o działaniach NATO", *Komunikat CBOS*, January 2002.

<sup>158</sup> "O przynależności Polski do NATO.."

## PERCEPTION OF THREAT: WORLD WAR, TERRORISM AND CONFLICT PROLIFERATION

During the last three years public support for Polish membership of the Alliance was not only sustained in comparison with the pre-accession period, but even increased slightly.<sup>159</sup> The operation in Afghanistan further boosted the popularity of the Alliance, despite the fact that, only 35 % of the public had faith in the success of the international anti-terrorist coalition in eliminating international terrorism.<sup>160</sup> But although Polish people were visibly satisfied with the membership, the fact of belonging to the powerful military alliance did not allay all their fears. In particular, the public was worried about the threat of terrorism and the possibility of a proliferation of conflict and its escalation into a major war.

Beginning with the first war in Chechnya in 1995, throughout the civil war in the Balkans, NATO intervention in Kosovo and the second conflict in Chechnya, up to the operation in Afghanistan, there was the recurrent fear of a sudden escalation of conflict. During the first Chechen war, 47 % of the public were afraid of world war. During the civil war in Bosnia, when NATO planes bombed Serb positions, 55 % had misgivings about the wisdom of the NATO decision for the same reasons. In March 1999, 56 % of Poles thought that the NATO operation in Kosovo held the potential to escalate into a major war. As the bombing campaign continued, this number rose to 64 %. Even after the end of hostilities and the successful deployment of KFOR in Kosovo in June 1999, 34 % of Polish people still remained apprehensive. The beginning of the second war in Chechnya in January 2000, sounded the alarms again: 49 % of Polish people were afraid that world peace was in danger.<sup>161</sup>

Not surprisingly, the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> and subsequent military operations in Afghanistan caused another wave of near-panic. The horrifying scenes from New York, broadcast repeatedly, were enough to give the viewers a taste of world war. The subsequent 'tough talk' of the American administration and several weeks of an uncertain international situation additionally fuelled public fears. Even before the operation started, in October 2001, 65 % of Poles thought that the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> could lead to world war. A month later, at the launch of operation 'Enduring Freedom', 60 % of Polish people thought that the action of Americans and British in Afghani-

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<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>160</sup> "Afganistan: wyjazd polskich.."

<sup>161</sup> "Polacy wobec wojny w Czeczeni", *Komunikat CBOS*, January 2000.

stan might escalate. Even after the end of the military phase of the operation, around 46 % were afraid that the presence of NATO forces in Afghanistan could cause world war.<sup>162</sup>

The events of September 11<sup>th</sup> induced a strong fear of terrorism and terrorist attacks in Polish society. This is a new phenomenon, but already very widespread. The majority of Polish people understand terrorism as an action aimed at causing large-scale intimidation of targeted groups and to instil in them a deep fear and a sense of permanent threat.<sup>163</sup> Prior to the tragedy in New York, the public was little aware of the problem because people in Poland had never experienced large-scale acts of terrorism. Afterwards, public rejection of the use of violence as a means to pursue even justified goals was total and complete.<sup>164</sup>

The tragedy in New York, broadcast day and night by all the media, came as a shock to literally everyone in Poland. However, it would have probably remained a distant, although horrifying, tragedy, if it had not been for membership in NATO. The fact that Poland constituted part of the Alliance changed the way in which the terrorist attacks in the USA were perceived and considered. When asked on September 13<sup>th</sup> if Poland might also become a target of terrorist attack, 51 % of respondents gave a positive answer.<sup>165</sup> Public perception of threat was consistent with the official statements of key political figures and the tone of discussion in the media. In line with the official statements of the politicians, the public agreed that the tragedy in the USA was not just America's business but concerned Poland as well. According to the opinion polls, Poland was a potential target for attack because a) international terrorism had an unpredictable nature and so anybody could become a target and b) because Poland, as a member of NATO, was obliged to show solidarity with the United States and that could provoke terrorists. Immediately after the tragedy in the USA, 77 % of Polish were in favour of Poland joining any allied operation that NATO might deem necessary.

The case of September 11<sup>th</sup> showed how membership in NATO changed popular perception of security in Poland. Whereas previously, people tended to understand security narrowly, as peace at home and in the neighbourhood, the Alliance broadened this perspective. Today, three years after accession, Polish people tend to see security issues more globally, and better understand the interdependence of

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<sup>162</sup> "Afganistan: wyjazd polskich.."

<sup>163</sup> "Reakcje Polaków na bombardowanie Afganistanu oraz opinie o terroryzmie", *Komunikat CBOS*, October 2001.

<sup>164</sup> "Nie akceptujemy przemocy", based on CBOS survey, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 18 July 2002.

<sup>165</sup> "Czy Polsce zagraża terroryzm", *Komunikat CBOS*, September 2001.

many defence and security – related processes that take place in various parts of the world. They now know that events in distant places can, potentially, have a direct impact on the security of their own country and perhaps on their lives.

One should be careful, however, of drawing much too far-reaching conclusions from that observation. As has already been pointed out, a typical reaction in Poland to the news on military conflict was a widespread fear of the escalation of conflict into a world war. What is interesting, however, is WHEN exactly public opinion begins to be deeply concerned. In the case of every conflict, it had already had some history of media coverage before the signs of public unease appeared. It was at the moment of external interference, be it the Russian invasions in Chechnya, or the NATO operation in the Balkans, that people in Poland began to fear the worst-case scenario. Apparently, the resentment against intervention from the without, owing to modern history, is deeply ingrained in post-communist society in Poland. Consequently, the public would always have misgivings in case of intervening operations, even if the intervening powers belong to the same military alliance to which that Poland belongs. This reluctance to accept military interventions is likely to persist in the future.

### THREE YEARS OF MEMBERSHIP IN RETROSPECT

The first three years of Polish membership in NATO were tumultuous beyond anyone's expectations. During those years, the public in Poland witnessed NATO intervention in the Balkans, deployment of Polish troops in the conflict zone in Kosovo, invocation of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty after September 11<sup>th</sup> and Polish engagement in the international fight against terrorism. In general, NATO security policy turned out to be very different to what had been popularly imagined and expected prior to the membership.

Nevertheless, in the eyes of the public in Poland, NATO remained the core institution to guarantee national security as well as lasting peace in Europe. Support for NATO increased in Poland back to the highest level of the pre-accession period and was the highest of the three new members of the Alliance. A Survey carried out in April 2002, showed that 73 % of the public favoured Polish membership in NATO and only 6 % was definitely against it.<sup>166</sup> Simultaneously, the confidence in NATO increased and fewer people perceive the Alliance as a potential threat to Polish independence. The governing elite

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<sup>166</sup> "O przynależności Polski do NATO i obecności polskich.."

shared popular satisfaction with the membership.<sup>167</sup> Moreover, the public in Poland turned out to be most enthusiastic about further expansion.<sup>168</sup> It could be an indication that the public in Poland is strongly in favour of 'co-operative security' and that the increased number of states participating in the security network would, in their opinion, extend the security and stability zone, contributing to lasting peace and stability in Europe.

### PROFESSIONAL MILITARY AND NATO

The attitude of the professional military in Poland towards NATO did not diverge significantly from that of the 'civilian' society. However, full acceptance of military commitments ensuing from membership in NATO came slower and with more misgivings. A year before the integration, military opinion was divided into two opposing camps on the question of the existence of a threat to Poland's independence: 44.7 % thought that there was no such threat and 45.7 % thought that there was. The accession to NATO changed the balance in a rather unexpected way: in the spring of 1999, only weeks after integration, 63.4 % of the military was already convinced that Polish independence was in danger and only 27 % thought otherwise! The dramatic shift certainly had to do with the beginning of NATO intervention in Kosovo, but even more than that it was due to a shocking realisation of the full extent of Poland's military commitments to NATO. Whereas the civilians worried about the threat to world peace, the military were concerned about the independence and sovereignty of the Polish state and the defence capabilities of Poland vis-à-vis NATO.

Subsequent developments did not justify military fears and so the number of those worried about independence and security in autumn 2001, dropped to 18 % of the professional military.<sup>169</sup> As tension lowered, confidence increased. The military came to accept specific military responsibilities ensuing from the membership in NATO, such as the deployment of troops in the conflict zones and stationing of NATO forces in Poland. But most importantly, nearly 79 % of the professional military believes that, if Poland's independence were threatened, Polish armed forces could rely on help from the allies in

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<sup>167</sup> Statement of Jerzy Szmajdziński, Polish Minister of Defence, *Polska Zbrojna* No 11, March 2002.

<sup>168</sup> "Polacy, Czesi i Węgrzy wobec NATO", *Komunikat CBOS*, February 2000; "O przynależności Polski do NATO..".

<sup>169</sup> Tadeusz Mitek, "Satysfakcja z NATO", *Polska Zbrojna*, No 12, March 2001, p.22; survey of WBBS (Military Bureau for Social Research), published in *Polska Zbrojna* No 40, September 2001, p. 8.

NATO.<sup>170</sup> With soldiers, that seems to be the best acknowledgment of confidence.

#### NEIGHBOURING STATES: FRIEND OR FOE?

Membership in NATO is the single most important factor to shape the public image of security in Poland, but it is certainly not the only one. The second significant determinant of the public view of Polish security is the way in which the relations with the neighbouring countries are perceived. Here public opinion was always divided. Personal views of Polish security situations in the region were always the result of a complex interplay of several factors: national and personal resentments, historical experience, particular perception of threat, post-1989 developments. The collapse of the USSR, the end of the Warsaw Pact and accession to NATO improved the public view of regional security in general, but it did not necessarily improve opinions on a particular neighbouring country.

Historically, the security of Poland depended on Polish relations with Russia and Germany, but more importantly, on the relationship between Russia and Germany. After the Second World War, the USSR took complete control of Polish foreign and security policy. For many years, the Soviet-sponsored official propaganda depicted Germany as a potential aggressor state, determined to recapture the pre-war German occupations in the west and north-east of Poland. In line with that logic, the Soviet Union remained the only credible ally of the Polish state and a reliable guarantor of its independence and territorial integrity. The combined result of the years of official indoctrination and experience of living in real life communism was such that the majority of Polish people learned to regard both Germany and Russia as enemies of the Polish state. Those two states conditioned Polish security situation. The third historically most important and problematic neighbour was Ukraine.

In the aftermath of post-1989 geopolitical changes many traditional views on Polish strategic environment had to be revised. Russia was pushed away from the Polish borders, new states of Ukraine and Belarus emerged, and Germany became an important ally within NATO and the main advocate of EU enlargement to the East. 'Reconciliation' became the key word in relations with the neighbour states. However, despite the profound effect that such a radical rearrangement of regional power relations had on traditional view of security environment, some old prejudices and fears could not be easily eradicated.

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<sup>170</sup> Survey of WBBS, February 2002.

Russia is continually perceived as the greatest potential threat to independence and sovereignty of Poland as well as to the entire region. The public apprehension reached the record level in 1995 when Russian president Boris Yeltsin unleashed diplomatic campaign aimed at impeding and reversing NATO enlargement process. Russian policy in the Balkans in the time of NATO operation in Kosovo in spring 1999 caused the second wave of resentment against the powerful neighbour.<sup>171</sup> Since then, the tension lowered. Fewer people in Poland perceived Russia as a possible threat to Polish independence, although the majority believed that Russian Federation remained an assertive power, aiming to dominate again the regional politics in Central Eastern Europe in the next 5 to 10 years. The official visit of President Vladimir Putin to Poland improved the popular image of Russian regional politics, nevertheless in February 2002, shortly after the visit, still 55 % of Polish would not trust official declarations. The good news was, the same opinion poll showed that only 9 % of Polish thought that Polish – Russian relations were bad, a significant improvement in comparison to the 40 % of the previous year, and the prevailing view was that the relations were neither good nor bad. Those cautious attitudes towards Russia originate from a more general conviction based on historical experience that Russian political declarations should never be fully trusted: consequently, the post-September 11 American – Russian rapprochement is also seen in Poland as only a passing phenomenon.<sup>172</sup>

Generally speaking, the NATO enlargement, revival of Polish-Russian diplomatic relations and Russian-American anti-terrorist resulted in the weakening of Polish traditional fear of the powerful neighbour. And despite the public criticism of selected aspects of Russian regional policy and unceasing fear of nuclear weapons in Kaliningrad,<sup>173</sup> two thirds of Polish society trusts that Polish – Russian relations can be co-operative and friendly in the future.<sup>174</sup> For the public Russia is not yet a friendly state, but no longer an enemy.

The picture of Polish – Ukrainian relationship is equally complex, although in this case the neighbourhood is of a different nature. Unlike Russia, Ukraine was not regarded as a potential threat to Polish independence or sovereignty, on the contrary, its emergence as an independent state improved Polish security situation. Polish policy-makers

<sup>171</sup> "Opinie o sytuacji kraju na arenie międzynarodowej", *Komunikat CBOS*, April 1999.

<sup>172</sup> "Opinie o zbliżeniu między Rosją a Zachodem i stosunkach polsko-rosyjskich", *Komunikat CBOS*, February 2002.

<sup>173</sup> "Oczekiwania dotyczące sytuacji w kraju w roku 2002", *Komunikat CBOS*, January 2002.

<sup>174</sup> "Sytuacja Polski na arenie ...", May 2000.



promptly recognised that fact and supported Ukrainian independent statehood from the beginning, advocating Ukrainian interests in international arena. Unfortunately, the opinion polls showed that the official policy lacked grassroots. Historical resentments remained alive on both sides of the border, and recently revived in Poland due to the long-standing, unresolved problem of restoration of Polish cemetery in Lviv. Polish people simply do not like Ukrainians. In the comparative survey, Ukrainians were selected as one of the nations least liked by the Polish, ranked well behind Germans and much lower than Russian people. Only the image of Belarusian is similarly bad, Belarus, however, is seldom thought of as a sovereign state and its defence policy is considered to be part of Russian overall security concept.<sup>175</sup> Given the negative perception of the new neighbour, the prospects of genuine Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation are not very good, although the number of people believing in the future good relations with Ukraine increased since 2000.

Germany is in the position of being an example of the greatest change in the traditional security perception of the neighbouring state. Between 1990 and 2002 the image of Germany evolved from that of the disliked neighbour and a potential threat to Polish sovereignty to that of the most desired partner for economic, political and military co-operation. Since the mid-1990s more and more people were optimistic about the prospects of Polish – German reconciliation and the number reached 76 % in 2000.<sup>176</sup> Nevertheless, the public remained extremely sensitive to historical issues and any statement concerning revision of post-war settlements always cause a setback in the Polish – German relationship.

Those popular images of a specific country and views on cooperation and reconciliation were directly correlated with such variables as age, education and place of residence. Predictably, little support can be found for reconciliation processes with Germans and Ukrainians among the elderly people remembering the Second World War, while the youth between 18 and 24 years were the greatest proponents of reconciliation with Germany and Ukraine. But the attitudes also depended on education – the better one's education, the more optimistic was his/her view of relations with the neighbouring state. Finally, a place of residence was important. The urban population was typically, in favour of better co-operation with the neighbours, whereas the inhabitants of small villages and farmers were sceptical and apprehen-

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<sup>175</sup> "Stosunek Polaków, Czechów, Węgrów i Litwinów do innych narodów", *Komunikat CBOS*, October 2000.

<sup>176</sup> "Sytuacja Polski..", May 2000.

sive.<sup>177</sup> The 'public' images of neighbouring states were convergent with what the surveys carried out among the professional military showed. In the evaluations of possible military threat from the neighbouring countries, the military ranked Russia first (60 %), Belarus second (40 %) and the Ukraine third (35 %). Next, came Germany (15 %) and Lithuania (7 %). Not surprisingly, the Czech Republic was classified as the least threatening country (5 %).<sup>178</sup>

## EUROPEAN UNION

The European Union is the final 'foreign' factor conditioning the public image of the Polish security position. In general, the EU nations enjoy more sympathy from the Poles than other European people do;<sup>179</sup> yet, as regards the integration processes, caution and uncertainty prevail. Support for integration with the EU never came close to the level of public support for NATO expansion, although in 2002, a record 60 % of population was in favour of EU membership. Despite the growing support, Polish people doubt the good will of the EU representatives. According to 40 % of the population, Polish – EU relations bring profit only to the European Union at the expense of Poland.<sup>180</sup>

The European Union, in popular conscience, is seldom perceived in terms of military policy, security issues or threats, rather, it is thought of in purely economic and social terms. Only the defence specialists and most educated people are aware of the plans for the ESDP and more generally, of the security dimension of the EU organisation. For the public at large, the Union means economic integration, for good and for bad. Free trade, freedom of travel, work and settlement, finally the possibility to appeal to European courts are the most important aspects of EU organisation.<sup>181</sup> Some of them, particularly the possibility to purchase land and real estate, meet with strong popular opposition. The potential threat of being 'bought out' by the foreigners from the EU is the most significant and perhaps the only security factor influencing public opinion of the EU. This line of reasoning, however, is mostly confined to the least educated and poorest groups of the Polish society, mostly to small farmers. The same people, a few

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<sup>177</sup> "Polacy o możliwości pojednania z Niemcami i Ukrainą", *Komunikat CBOS*, April 1999.

<sup>178</sup> "Jedno pytanie", Survey of WBBS, June 2001.

<sup>179</sup> Americans, French, Italians, British and Swedish are the five favourite nations of Polish people. See "Stosunek Polaków...", Oct. 2000.

<sup>180</sup> "Ocena dotychczasowych stosunków Polski z Unią Europejską", *Komunikat CBOS*, May 1999.

<sup>181</sup> "Opinie o skutkach integracji Polski z Unią Europejską i przebiegu negocjacji akcesyjnych", *Komunikat CBOS*, May 2000.

years ago, were the most ardent opponents of Polish membership in NATO.

#### SECURITY INSTITUTIONS: TRUSTED, BUT NOT POPULAR

The traditional prestige of the military profession in Poland was a recurrent theme in many publications of the pre-accession period. But while foreign analysts like J. Simon or R. Szemerkenyi<sup>182</sup> expressed their concern regarding the excessive political ambitions of the military in the context of the high social respect for this profession, in Poland the high standing of the men in uniform was seldom perceived as a potential threat to democratic institutions.<sup>183</sup>

At first sight the polls seemed to confirm that the post-communist military remained an institution of high social prestige and confidence. In various surveys the public repeatedly chose the army as one of the most trusted institutions. Between 60 % and 75 % of respondents regularly confirmed a positive opinion of the military as opposed to 10 to 17 % having a negative image.<sup>184</sup> In 2001, the military ranked fifth among the most trusted public institutions in Poland, with 76 % of respondents declaring their confidence in the army.<sup>185</sup> More surprisingly, despite press allegations of corruption in the tender for the multifunctional plane<sup>186</sup>, the public does not perceive the military as a corrupted institution.<sup>187</sup> If one added to that the fact that over 80 % of the men in uniform declared themselves proud to be part of the military profession<sup>188</sup>, the image of a prestigious, proud and trusted professional group would seem complete.

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<sup>182</sup> Jeffrey Simon, 'Central European Civil – Military Relations and NATO Expansion' in Anton Bebler (ed.), *Civil -Military Relations in Post-Communist States. Central and Eastern Europe in Transition* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1997), p.120; Reka Szemerkenyi, 'Central European Civil-Military Reforms at Risk', *Adelphi Paper* No 306 (London, IISS: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 54 – 55.

<sup>183</sup> "Szacunek dla munduru", interview with Ryszard Kaczorowski, the last Polish President-in-exile, *Polska Zbrojna*, No 28, July 2001, p. 5.

<sup>184</sup> "Instytucje publiczne w opinii społecznej", *Komunikat CBOS*, December 2001.

<sup>185</sup> "Jacy jesteśmy? Zaufanie Polaków do ludzi i instytucji publicznych", *Komunikat CBOS*, February 2001.

<sup>186</sup> Grzegorz Czwartosz, "Dobrych manier czar", *Polska Zbrojna*, No 11, Marzec 2002, pp. 21-22.

<sup>187</sup> "Gdzie najczęściej spotykamy się ze zjawiskiem korupcji", *Komunikat CBOS*, July 1999.

<sup>188</sup> WBBS Survey, January 2001.

The reality, however, is not quite what the numbers suggest. The military is trusted, but that does not necessarily mean that it is popular or socially respected. Continuous draft difficulties confirm this problem. From the mid-1990s, each year the percentage of conscripts taken into the service from the entire pool of draftees declined. In 2001, only 22.7 % of all eligible men were drafted into the armed forces. The military service is most unpopular among educated and wealthy people who are most successful in finding ways to avoid conscription.<sup>189</sup> As a result, the general level of education among the rank-and-file became dramatically low. Some 50 % of the conscripts each year had only completed elementary school. The university-educated people in practice are not drafted, and even if they are occasionally, the army does not know how to employ their qualifications effectively. In the opinion of specialists, those negative trends will be reversed in the near future.<sup>190</sup> It is very likely considering that only 15 % of the public favour conscript army. The majority would have preferred either a professional armed force (35 %) or some sort of mixed professional-conscript army (40 %).<sup>191</sup>

The changes affected the officer corps as well. The loss of job stability after 1989, the deterioration of living standards, reductions and continuous restructuring eroded their self-esteem and caused deep frustration. In the opinion of the military, the post-communist reforms were neither sufficient nor carried out properly, the defence capabilities remained far from being satisfactory, and the decision-makers showed little interest in defence requirements.<sup>192</sup> Moreover, opinion polls revealed the existence of a gap between the social image of the military profession and perception of the officers who do not consider their profession socially respected or prestigious any more. Table 1 and 2 illustrate the point.<sup>193</sup>

The communication break between the military and society and the resulting frustration could be attributed to various factors, some of them inevitable in the process of post-communist transformation. The place of the military as an institution in democratic system changed in

<sup>189</sup> Włodzimierz Kaleta, 'Pobór bez wyboru', *Polska Zbrojna*, No 18, May 1998.

<sup>190</sup> Tadeusz Mitek, "Zaproszenie w kamasze", *Polska Zbrojna*, No 9, March 2002, pp. 17 – 18.

<sup>191</sup> 'Służba wojskowa i służba zastępcza'. *Komunikat CBOS*, December 1999.

<sup>192</sup> 'Gorzki smak reform' (The Bitter Taste of Reforms), *Polska Zbrojna* No 18, May 1996, p.18; Col.Tadeusz Mitek, 'Nastroje pod Kreską' (Feelings Below Average), *Polska Zbrojna* No. 39, September 1998, p. 20; Paweł F.Nowak, "Armia w remoncie", *Rzeczpospolita*, 8.11.2000; Ryszard Choroszy, "Obronione miliony", *Polska Zbrojna* No 7, February 2001.

<sup>193</sup> Source for both tables: Stanisław Jarmoszko, 'Społeczne aspekty przemian w Wojsku Polskim', *Studia i Materiały* No 48, (Warszawa: BPI MON, 1998), p. 140.

comparison with the past regime and the armed forces still find it hard to comprehend the altered political priorities of the decision-makers in Poland. Secondly, after the turbulent early 1990s the army prefers to keep the image of an institution away from political debates. The side effect of this policy is lesser coverage of military issues in the media and a smaller interest in military affairs among the research analysts.<sup>194</sup> Finally, the army lacks a conscious promotional strategy carried out by professionals, both civilian and in uniform.<sup>195</sup> Many journalists and researchers admit that the armed forces became increasingly open to co-operation; nevertheless the information is seldom prepared and disseminated in a professional, well considered manner. As a result, the image of the army in the media is painted in black or white: either that of a national, patriotic institution to be proud of, or of a dirty, brutal and underdeveloped organisation.<sup>196</sup>

But the gap between the military and the society in Poland is also a fragment of a wider problem: the absence of a genuine 'security community'. With the exception of few institutes that are typically connected with the political elite<sup>197</sup> and serve as a good place for retirement for the former ministers and under-secretaries of state, there is no place for a public debate on security and defence policy in Poland. The only public discussion takes place in the media, and remains disconnected from the decision-making centres.

Table 1

Question:

*In your opinion, has the attractiveness of the military profession generally change over the last 5-6 years compared to other professions in our country?*

%	Society	Professionals
Increased significantly	7	6
Increased a little	27	19
Did not change	35	17
Diminished a little	15	19
Diminished significantly	4	36
Difficult to say	12	3

<sup>194</sup> Jadwiga Staniszkis, 'Brakuje głosu wojskowych', *Polska Zbrojna* No 5, January 2001, p. 5.

<sup>195</sup> Leszek Laszczak, 'Autopromocja', *Polska Zbrojna*, No 5, February 2002.

<sup>196</sup> Tadeusz Filipek, 'Pióro i armia', *Polska Zbrojna*, No 5, January 2001.

<sup>197</sup> For example Instytut Stosunków Międzynarodowych in Warsaw, Instytut Studiów Strategicznych in Cracow.

Table 2

Question: *In your opinion, has the prestige and social esteem of the military profession change over the last 5 – 6 years in our country?*

%	Society	Professionals
Increased significantly	7	7
Increased a little	27	28
Did not change	37	26
Diminished a little	16	22
Diminished significantly	4	16
Difficult to say	9	1

#### INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION – WAKING UP TO THE POST-SEPTEMBER 11 WORLD

If one had to find a single phrase that would correctly describe the changes in public image of security, defence and military problems in Poland, until September 11<sup>th</sup> it would be a rush of optimism. In the time that elapsed between the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact in 1991, and the vicious terrorist attack in 2001, there was a visible alteration in popular perception of security and military issues in Poland, from a desperate searching for hard security guarantees to feeling reasonably secure within NATO. Furthermore, accession to NATO for the people in Poland was a visible sign of positive changes in international relations and of the improvement of the international standing of the country. Finally, the security relations in the region of Central Eastern Europe evolved from high apprehension towards cooperation and although the situation in the region was far from ideal, people in Poland generally believed in the possibility of reconciliation.<sup>198</sup>

The events of September 11 destroyed that comfortable image. Old concerns and the images of threat became obsolete overnight and the new, unfamiliar danger of international terrorism sprang up. People in Poland were fortunate never to experience terrorism before, but that fact did not stop people from thinking that Poland could be a potential target. The security situation appeared serious also because the

<sup>198</sup> See "Sytuacja Polski na arenie międzynarodowej w opinii publicznej", *Komunikat CBOS*, May 2000; "Sytuacja Polski na arenie międzynarodowej", *Komunikat CBOS*, April 1999; "Polacy, Czesi i Węgrzy wobec NATO", *Komunikat CBOS*, February 2000, "Oczekiwania dotyczące sytuacji w kraju w roku 2002", *Komunikat CBOS*, January 2002.

known and trusted institutions such as the national military, NATO, OSCE, UN admitted to not being prepared to counter adequately with the somewhat elusive danger that 'international terrorism' presented.

NATO has already begun serious discussion on the redefinition of the strategic concept in order to prepare the Alliance in confronting new security threats. Today, Poland is in need of a serious public discussion on the new dangers and ways of confronting it, followed by a strategic review of defence needs. Only then would the image of threats, security situation and defence requirements regain realistic proportions and some of the previous confidence and optimism of the public could be restored.





# **Development of Views of the Slovak Public on the Armed Forces and NATO membership**

**Karol Čukan**

## **INTRODUCTION**

State defence and evaluation of the military are issues that, before 1989, were not the focus of the Slovak public, as the public was not supposed to express its opinion on these issues and there was only one official opinion declared by the leading and monopoly state political force, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

From the beginning of the 90's the issue of how to guarantee the country's defence and security emerged in public discussion, becoming an integral part of public opinion polls as well. Originally, the political elite raised the topic of guaranteeing security, but slowly and gradually the public became involved in the creation of citizens' active relation toward defence and security. In spite of the objective importance of this topic, issues related to the defence and security of Slovakia, and the position of the armed forces in society represent secondary or even tertiary issues from a point of public view. A more distinct and stabile public opinion on these topics, especially on the issue of guaranteeing the defence of Slovakia, has gradually developed over the last decade.

## **VIEWS OF THE SLOVAK PUBLIC ON SECURITY AND DEFENCE**

### **Genesis of the Creation of Public Opinion**

In the past, but to some extent the present as well, the Slovak public has shown relatively little interest in foreign policy, not considering it an urgent issue. It is not unusual that the Slovak public has made an assessment and judgement of foreign policy based on limited information, and that after 1989, the public showed a low degree of interest in the first period after the new security system was established. The low interest and mostly intuitive attitudes of the public towards

Slovakia's foreign orientation, and especially toward defence issues, was very evident.

1.1.1. After the establishment of sovereign Slovakia, international policy has become oriented on the European Union as a strategic direction of the country. This orientation has not been in principle disputed by any political representation governing in Slovakia since 1993 and the public has accepted it positively. In 1993 more than two thirds of the population supported the idea of membership in the European Union. Support of the Slovak Republic's accession to the European Union has consistently been high in the last decade, oscillating at about 70 per cent, and in comparison to other international institutions, public trust of the European Union has prevailed. Slovaks, especially the younger and middle-aged generations, identify themselves with Europe through their orientation toward European Union membership. The separatist attempts of certain political circles and the exaggeration of national elements that emerged mainly in the first years of the Slovak state, and that still appear from time to time, have not brought about any significant public response. While the issue of European Union membership is clear to the public from a long-term perspective, the issue of the second strategic foreign policy orientation concerning membership in the North Atlantic Alliance has not been accepted so positively, and the development of the Slovak public's view on NATO has been contradictory, even dramatic.

In the period before the establishment of the Slovak Republic (1990-1992), there was no lucid view on defence and security.<sup>199</sup> At this time, post-revolutionary idealism and enthusiasm expressed by the idea that after the iron curtain fall and the bipolar world breakdown and there was no longer any external threat. Issues of defence and security were pushed aside to the margin of public interest.

With the establishment of the Military of the Slovak Republic and after the foundation of the Slovak Republic, defence achieved a new dimension and the process of building an identity for the Slovak Armed Forces began. Immediately after the establishment of the independent Slovak Republic, a part of the political elite thought that it would be best to rely on its own forces and not access into any military pact. The public was supportive of the idea. According to polls in March 1993, one third of Slovakia's population stuck to the concept of self-reliance, to the idea that the country could not trust anybody and had to rely on itself. At that time, only one fourth of the adult popula-

<sup>199</sup> This pertains to issues such as professionalization of the army, civilian control, service of women, participation in peacekeeping operations, etc.

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tion of Slovakia supported a Western orientation.<sup>200</sup> As of the end of 1993, serious discussions on the Slovak Republic's accession to NATO had begun, and parliamentary political parties, except for the Slovak National Party, assimilated the idea of its accession. However, the public has only gradually accepted this idea.

Assessing the development of Slovak public opinion on defence and security, it is very important to point out the fact that there is a strong orientation toward a European security system, that is toward something which does not exist in practice. The fact that in 1999 more than one third of the population expressed such an opinion shows that the Slovak public needed some time to develop more mature attitudes toward security and defence issues. This can be explained by two antagonistic tendencies that still exist among the public. While the idea of a neutral Slovakia, as well as a possible reversion to co-operation with Russia, has gradually weakened, there has been relatively strong opposition to the position of the United States in world policy, as well as to NATO.<sup>201</sup>

Public opinion polls show that as of 1994, the idea of joining a collective defence began to gain majority, but only in 1996 did it prevail definitely. Nevertheless, there was no stable opinion on the form of such a defence until recently, when the opinion of the necessity to strive for a collective defence through NATO membership became more stable, slowly gaining a majority amongst the population.<sup>202</sup>

Generally, the development of the Slovak public opinion on the issue of guaranteeing defence of Slovakia shifted from an initial lack of interest and ambivalence, to the idea of non-membership in international institutions, to the idea of joining the collective defence system.

## PUBLIC ATTITUDE TOWARD SLOVAK REPUBLIC MEMBERSHIP IN NATO

In the past, a reserved and even hostile attitude toward the Alliance was evident in the Slovak public opinion. After November 1989 and especially after the dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty, a large part of public believed that NATO would also be disbanded, since military blocs were considered useless. This expectation together with ideo-

<sup>200</sup> See Gyarfašová, O., Krivý, V., and Velšic, M.: *Krajina v pohybe (The Country in a Motion)*, Bratislava 2001, p. 196

<sup>201</sup> Distrust of U.S. policy could be seen especially during the Kosovo crisis in 1999.

<sup>202</sup> According to results of the Bratislava National Cultural Centre from November 2001, 38 per cent of the Slovak population maintained such an opinion and 32 per cent of the people thought that it was necessary to strive to establish a collective defence system within Europe.

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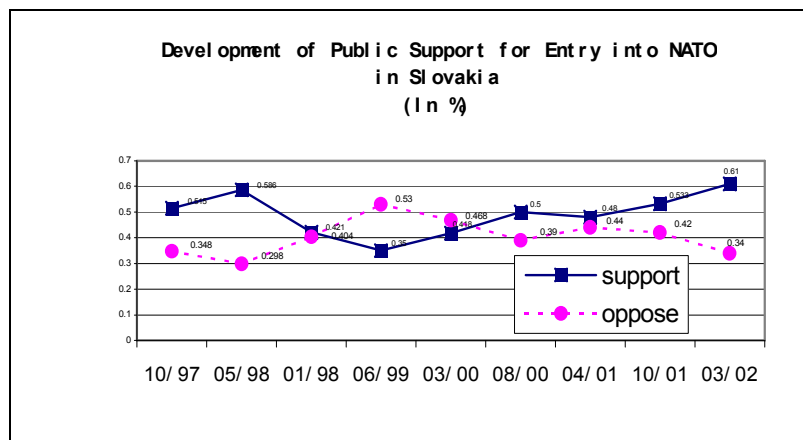
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logical prejudice against the Alliance, deeply rooted especially in the opinion of middle-aged and older generations resulted in a low degree of trust in NATO at the beginning of the 90's. From 1992 to 1999, a parity between trust in and distrust of NATO could be noticed; nevertheless, during the Kosovo crisis, the period of distrust prevailed.

As mentioned above, the idea of accession to NATO arose at the end of 1993. Public support has increased gradually, especially before the planned referendum in 1997, when more than 50 percent of the total population supported NATO membership for the first time.<sup>203</sup> The support dropped down moderately after the thwarted referendum, however, by spring of 1999, the amount of supporters outnumbered the objectors again.<sup>204</sup> The following graph demonstrates the development of support for entry into NATO since 1997.



The most significant period of the formation of public attitude toward accession can be seen in the years 1994 – 1998, when the Movement for Democratic Slovakia, (HZDS) led by Vladimír Mečiar, was in power. This period was marked by a crisis in the international position of Slovakia, resulting in the failure of Slovakia to be integrated into Euro-Atlantic structures. Slovakia was not included into the first wave of NATO enlargement, nor into the group of future candidates for European Union membership.<sup>205</sup> In spite of these negative

<sup>203</sup> In October 1997, most citizens considered Slovak membership in NATO to be an optimal variant of guaranteeing defence capability.

<sup>204</sup> In the autumn of 1997, the referendum was thwarted by the government's obstructions even though it was officially held.

<sup>205</sup> After the Madrid Summit, when Slovakia was not included into the first group of invitees, a large part of the public expressed the opinion that it was necessary to strive to join the Alliance in spite of the failure. The result of the Madrid Summit has not discouraged supporters.

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signals from abroad, support of the idea of NATO membership had already significantly increased before 1998, when HZDS lost the elections. For a significant part of the public, NATO membership represented an opportunity to change the unfavourable political development in Slovakia. The results of the elections in 1998, in which HZDS was defeated and the new government was established by a broad coalition led by Mikuláš Dzurinda, to some extent reflected the majority of voters' dissatisfaction with failures in Slovak foreign policy.

In spite of the generally respected necessity to overturn the unfavourable position of Slovakia in foreign policy and unambiguous steps taken in this direction by the new government, public support of the idea of its membership moderately dropped in the autumn of 1998, shortly after the elections, as many supporters of the Slovak National Party and especially of the Movement for Democratic Slovakia began to hesitate on the membership after their political leaders became part of the governmental opposition.

The bombing of Yugoslavia in the spring of 1999 had a huge impact on the public attitudes toward its membership. The public reacted very sensitively to the fact that the territory of a close Slavic state, with a large Slovak minority, was being bombed. The ratio of opponents to supporters for its entry was approximately 1,5 : 1. During the Kosovo crisis and immediately after it, support of Slovakia's entry into NATO dropped even below 40 per cent and it was necessary to 'revitalise' the idea of Slovakia's membership among the public.

When the situation in Yugoslavia moderated and especially by the end of 1999, after the Government adopted the PRENAME program, elucidating steps that should help Slovakia's entry into NATO, the public attitude became more inclined to the idea of its membership. By the end of 2000, the ratio of opponents to supporters began to change. Significant progress in the development of public opinion on this issue emerged mainly in 2001 and 2002, when support for the membership increased to 60 percent. In mid 2002, several months before the NATO Prague summit, support for Slovakia's membership stabilised at the level of 57 to 60 percent.

Several factors have influenced the changes in public opinion of its membership. The present situation is a result of a maturing attitude of Slovak citizens toward the important issue of state interest. Every year, in Slovakia, the number of people who have not lived in the period of the bipolar world and who have no traditional negative attitude toward NATO is growing. Also, the opinion of the middle-aged generation (especially the more productive and educated part) has changed; they are not interested in Slovakia's isolation in the future.

Concentrated efforts of the Slovak Government in transforming the Armed forces and in the field of foreign policy positively influenced the formation of a more stable, pro-NATO position of public

opinion. An extensive information campaign oriented on creating a positive image of the Alliance, explaining the conditions and consequences of Slovakia accession to NATO, had a positive impact on the public as well. This campaign integrated media, state and political institutions and several non-governmental organisations.

A change in rhetoric of HZDS leaders who, after a period of questioning the idea of entry in 1998 and 1999, joined the integration efforts of Slovakia in 2000 and also contributed to a more consistent public opinion. This step of HZDS leaders resulted in a gradual transition of an important part of the HZDS electoral base to the side of the supporters of NATO entry. Several other factors must be mentioned as well, like the threat of international terrorism after September 11.

#### WHO IS IN FAVOUR OF AND WHO IS AGAINST SLOVAKIA'S ENTRY INTO THE ALLIANCE?

Differences in political preferences of citizens, educational and social-economic status can explain a variety of attitudes toward membership. The generational differences are evident as well.

From the point of view of electoral preferences of the population, the voters of right-wing parties and the Hungarian Coalition Party have supported membership for a long time. Many voters of centrist and left wing parties (Social Democracy and Democratic Left Party) have gradually begun to support the idea of integration. As already stated, a change in rhetoric of HZDS leading representatives has influenced HZDS voters positively as well, although its potential voters lag behind the average support. Voters of the hard left (the Communist Party of Slovakia) and the nationalistically oriented Slovak National Party maintain an oppositional attitude toward membership.<sup>206</sup>

Younger generations with a higher education especially support membership. The idea of entry into NATO is highly supported by entrepreneurs who expect an improvement in business conditions. The older generation and population in small villages as well as the population in regions with a high unemployment rate have a reserved or restrained attitude toward membership. Lower social strata of the population expect that entry into NATO will be connected with an increase in military spending at the expense of social programs, and therefore are more cautious about supporting membership.

#### Public Attitude Toward a Possible Referendum on NATO Membership

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<sup>206</sup> The attitude of HZDS leaders toward entry into NATO was unambiguous in this period.

One important condition that is characteristic of the public attitude is the opinion on decision-making. Political and public discussions have dealt mainly with the issue of how the decision should be taken – whether via a referendum, or through an approval of the National Council of the Slovak Republic or of the Government.

In the long run the Slovak population preferred a referendum, an idea that appeared in 1995. It has been included in the programs of many parties, mainly with left and centrist-left orientation. In 1997 a controversial referendum on this issue was held and if the Government had not thwarted it, it would probably have been successful and given the politicians the green card for the accession.

After 1997 the idea of a referendum disappeared from the agenda of political parties and the public began to neglect it as well. This tendency holds true also in 2002, in the year of the NATO Prague summit. Despite the fact that the percent of supporters has decreased with the approaching NATO Prague summit, a referendum, as a decision-making tool on this issue, still prevails, gaining the support of approximately 60 per cent of the Slovak population.<sup>207</sup>

A possible new referendum would not play a negative role in the process of Slovak integration into NATO and it could be successful. Results of polls showed that two thirds of those who would participate in the possible referendum would have voted in favour of its entry.<sup>208</sup>

### **Advantages and Disadvantages of Membership from the Point of View of the Slovak Public**

In order to understand the public attitude toward the Alliance and toward membership, it is necessary to discuss how the public perceives its consequences. It is important to identify what is seen as an advantage and where negative impact on Slovakia and its citizens are expected.

The Slovak public quite intensely perceives a connection between membership in NATO and membership in the European Union. Roughly two thirds of the Slovak population agreed with the statement that if Slovakia were invited into NATO, it would improve its position on entry into the European Union as well.

Slovakia's accession to NATO is considered a step toward increasing its international prestige and the public expects it will guaran-

<sup>207</sup> Support of this idea was very high until 2000, when almost 79 per cent of the people agreed with the referendum. Only 17 per cent of respondents expressed the opinion that only parliamentarians should decide on this issue.

<sup>208</sup> About 66 per cent of voters would take part in the possible referendum.

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tee more security for Slovakia.<sup>209</sup> This increase in international prestige and increased security for Slovakia are the two most significant arguments taken into account by the public in supporting or opposing such a decision. An important positive factor is the expectation that there will be a greater inflow of foreign investments into Slovakia.

Opponents of membership point out the possible increase in the defence budget. Elderly people especially consider membership too expensive and argue that the money needed to invest in the modernization of the armed forces in order to achieve compatibility with the NATO force, could be used more properly for social welfare, health care and education. Many of the opponents to membership think that it will not enhance the security of Slovakia but on the contrary, such a step could diminish the present level of security. The inconsistency of public attitudes toward this issue is evident by the fact that Slovaks are not willing to invest money into the modernization of the armed forces. The public has great reservations about the possible deployment of foreign military units and stationing nuclear weapons on Slovak territory. Public opinion on these issues has been negative for a longer period of time. However, the Slovak public agrees and seemingly will agree on the participation of the Slovak units in peacekeeping missions. The public would also respect sending Slovak units to defend other Alliance member.

## ATTITUDE OF THE SLOVAK PUBLIC TOWARD THE MILITARY AND THE OPINION ON ITS CREDIBILITY AND QUALITY

### Credibility of the Armed Forces

1.1.2. The extent of trust or distrust in political and social institutions is an attendant sign reflecting a certain aspect of political awareness of citizens. The very extent of trust is not necessarily based upon good knowledge of an institution. As poll results show, confidence in a certain institution is not necessarily connected with political opinions and attitudes rather in the Slovak environment, it is mostly activated in the period before and during elections. Public opinion of the main state institutions became ordinary in Slovakia only after November 1989. Nowadays, trust in

<sup>209</sup> As shown by surveys carried out in recent years, more than half of the Slovak population thought that in the case of Slovak accession to NATO, security of the country would increase. 28 per cent of population did not expect any changes and 10 per cent thought that the level of security could even decrease when in. Those opposed to membership belong mostly to a group of skeptics.

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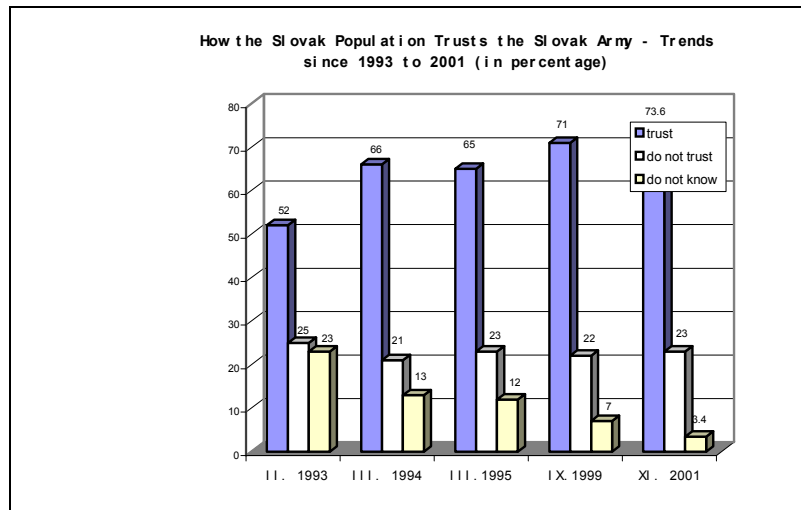
state institutions, including the armed forces, is among the most frequent topics in public polls.

The Slovak Army, as one of the armed tools of political power in the new state, lacks historical tradition, and moreover, the citizens have only personal or mediated experience through the former federal Czechoslovak military. In spite of the fact that there is a significant deficit in its state tradition, the Slovak military and Slovak soldiers are traditionally perceived very positively. It can be said that the military is an institution that Slovaks trust deeply, but public attitude toward the military is traditional, even conservative. The military has never played a negative role and has never been an object or subject of political conflicts. On the other hand, it has never been given any special attention by society.

Traditional trust in the military is not a result of its combat activity but has been created through long-term positive interactions between the public and soldiers. This is a reflection of its neutral behavior in critical moments of Slovak history; it is based upon the devotion of soldiers in rescuing people's lives and property during natural disasters; it comes from assistance provided by soldiers to social, sports and economic activities of civil institutions in towns and mainly in villages of Slovakia. However, until recently there has been a certain barrier in informing the public on problems of military life. Military problems were considered taboo and many myths about the army in the past still remain in the public awareness.

At the present, the public perceives the Slovak Army as a trustworthy institution, and the positive opinion has not changed for many years. In comparison to trust of other state institutions, no dramatic change in public trust of the military has been noted. Confidence in the military is growing. When the Slovak armed forces was established in 1993, 52 percent of the population considered it a trustworthy institution, and at the present time, the public rates it very positively – the group expressing trust has exceeded more than 70 percent (see the following chart).

From the time of its establishment, the public perceives the Slovak armed forces as the trustworthiest institution. Mainly respondents with a university education and countryside inhabitants have expressed the highest level of confidence in the military, where almost two thirds of the people express their trust in the armed forces. The military is trustworthy especially among cohorts aged 45 to 59. The fact that young people aged 18 to 29 also trust the military, including a change in the composition of military personnel, is very positive for the future of the army and its reform, although they do not trust it to the same extent as the elderly generations.



The Slovak public is inclined to believe that the army is necessary (more than two thirds of the Slovak population maintains this opinion), and more than 50% of Slovaks agree with the view that 'it is necessary to defend the sovereignty of the State at all costs and to invest into its modernization in order to maintain its strength'. Main social and demographic groups do not significantly differ from each other in this opinion, which is a very favourable fact from the point of view that there is a necessity to modernize the armed forces. The positive public opinion is reflected also in the fact that citizens reject the statement that defence is meaningless for a small nation, since superpowers decide its fate. Not only does the public appreciate the military and not only is the armed forces the trustworthiest institution, but people have an understanding for many problems the military has to deal with in order to fulfill its mission in national defence.

#### PUBLIC OPINION ON THE QUALITY OF THE SLOVAK MILITARY

Looking at the armed forces of the Slovak Republic from a public point of view, we can recognize two levels. One of them expresses a high level of trust and awareness of its importance, showing a certain degree of criticism in appreciating its present quality and capability to face potential threats to the state.

After November 1989 the military was faced with more criticism than before 1989, since people assess it from many aspects, although the assessment is often very cursory, not based upon profound knowledge of conditions within the military. Everyday life of the armed

forces is still evaluated from the perspective of its personal experience with conscript service, which does not necessarily respond to today's reality. Quite a large part of the population assess the level of discipline in the army critically. Similarly, the professional qualities of Slovak soldiers are frequently criticized. However, despite the extent of criticism of the quality of the present military, prestige of the military profession has been quite high with the professional soldier being placed roughly in the middle of the ladder of most frequent professions.

The public most frequently and intensely evaluates the position and conditions of conscript service. Many conscripts live in unsuitable conditions, which is known by the public and considered the most negative aspect of the military. Problems of conscripts' service conditions, chicanery and undisciplined behaviour of conscripts out of the barracks are considered the weakest side of the present armed forces.

### **Public Opinion on the Shift to All-Volunteer Forces**

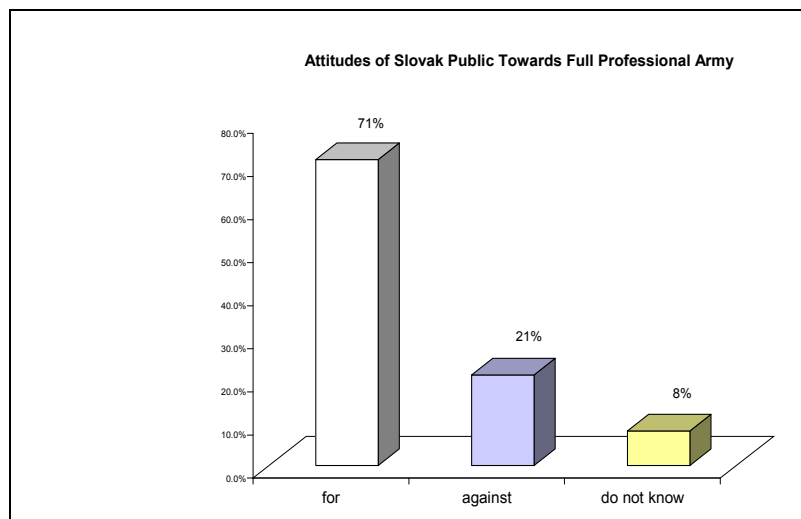
In several recent years the picture of the army has changed quite radically. After 1989 and mainly after 1993, debates ensued on the future format of the armed forces of the newly established state. Most of the debates focused on the shift from conscript to all-volunteer forces. A massive mixed military consisting of conscript and professional soldiers had the lowest support (20 percent of the population). One fourth of Slovak inhabitants consider all-volunteer forces the best solution. A relatively small military with a prevailing number of professional soldiers has been strongly supported. The public shows a vivacious interest in the future format of the armed forces, which is documented by the low number of respondents who avoid the answer (about 20 percent) in comparison to evasive answers to other questions concerning the quality of the forces (25 – 30 percent).

At the end of 2001, the military leadership decided to gradually professionalize the military, which should be completed by the end of 2006. The change in the format will affect not only the military but also some aspects of life in Slovak society. Young men – military service candidates – and their parents are especially interested in the shift. Results of empirical surveys show that a great part of the population agrees with this principal step in building the key component of the Armed Forces of Slovakia. On the following graph, data from the end of 2001 confirm this.

1.1.3. How do certain social groups of the population perceive this step? Mainly citizens with a higher education appreciate professionalization, and those who are inclined to the political right wing. Enthusiasm for all-volunteer forces is lower among voters

and supporters of the political centre, and it is the lowest among the left-oriented population. An all-volunteer military is accepted mainly by young people and by groups with a higher social status. It is obvious that the opinion on the shift of format of the military is mainly determined by political status and political orientation of citizens.

The process of professionalization of the Army in Slovakia is at the very beginning, therefore issues regarding it require broader public and expert discussion. The public has a rather poor understanding of the costs, especially in the first years of establishing all-volunteer forces. The whole set of services performed by conscripts will have to be done by outsourcing. There is the issue of democratic civilian control of the military, in which conscripts play a substantial part.



An attendant effect of transformation of the military is a growing interest of women in the military service. In the past women in uniform were not a frequent sight within the Slovak military. Their service was limited to administrative functions and to service in signal units. At the present time, women form approximately 6 percent of the professional corps. With the professionalization and subsequent changes in military personnel, women will be more attracted to service, not only for administrative functions, but also for typically 'male' positions such as command and combat positions. More and more women want to serve in peacekeeping missions. Soldiers view this change quite positively and more than two thirds of male soldiers do not mind serving in mixed gender units. But the public attitude toward this issue is rather conservative. Only every fifth citizen fully

agrees with the service of women in the military with the same number of citizens being strongly against it. The opinion prevails among the Slovak public that women do not belong in the armed forces, but if they want to serve in it, they should be given the opportunity to do so.

## CONCLUSION

1.1.4. Since 1989 the face of Europe has changed substantially. One social-economic system is in the past, the Soviet Union was disintegrated and Czechoslovakia disappeared. The independent and sovereign Slovak Republic was established and, as its basic foreign policy goal, it designated a fully-fledged membership in the European Union and the North-Atlantic Alliance. Most of the political parties and the core of the political elite have accepted this foreign political orientation from the very beginning of the newly established state. On the other hand the public, directing its attention on and understanding issues of foreign policy, including issues of security and defence, only very slowly grasped the overall position of Slovakia on the international scene. The public has gone through a complex process of political maturation, which can be seen through security and defence issues.

In the development of public opinions on Slovakia's defence and security, several stages can be determined. The first stage deals with searching for an optimal form of defence guarantees. This process resulted in the rejection of ideas of separation and neutrality and in shifting to the idea of integrating into a collective defence, which initiated a broad discussion on its form and pattern. The idea of being integrated into a non-existent Pan-European security structure prevailed for quite a long time. In the third stage the public came to the conclusion that the best solution for security and defence would be a membership in NATO. This attitude, represented by a significant majority of the population, has gained substantial stability to the present.

Issues of defence and security are closely connected with the position of the military in society. Despite the fact that the Armed forces of the Slovak Republic do not have a long-term history and tradition, they enjoy a very high trust among Slovak citizens being considered an inseparable element of the Slovak statehood. The Slovak public has some reservations about the military, criticizing the level of training and professional qualities of the personnel. The public appreciates the transformational steps aimed at the reduction of personnel and creating all-volunteer forces. For the time being, understanding the complexity of the shift to a professional military has been more or less intuitive and superficial, and many supporters of all-volunteer forces see all-volunteer forces as a chance to avoid conscript service. In the last

decade Slovakia and its public have made progress in regard to guaranteeing security and in respect to establishing a new position and prestige of the armed forces. Recent surveys show that public opinion on the direction of European and Euro-Atlantic orientation has stabilized.

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# **Changes of the Hungarian Public Opinion on Security, Defence and the Military**

**Zoltan Laszlo Kiss**

## **INTRODUCTION**

One of the most important targets of the Hungarian security sector reform efforts was the national military itself. The ultimate goal of the re-structuring, modernization and conversion process of the Hungarian Defence Forces (HDF) was to establish a modern, 'post-Cold-war'-type of military organization, which is basically convergent with its host society, and exists under strong civilian control. This effective, transparent and accountable organization should be professionally and technically well-prepared to protect peace, and able to guarantee the political independence, security and territorial integrity of the country.

When Hungary joined NATO, political decision-makers added new tasks to the previous, traditional national defence-related tasks of the HDF. These tasks were derived from two main resources: from the re-assessment of new threats perceived from the international security environment, and from our NATO membership and commitments to other international organizations, that means to contribute to the maintenance of security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area, in accordance with the requirements of the new Strategic Concept of NATO <sup>210</sup> and our new status, as an integral part of the collective defence system of the Alliance. <sup>211</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> The Alliance's Strategic Concept. Approved by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Washington D.C. on the 23rd and 24th April 1999. Press Release NAC-S(99)65. (24 Apr. 1999). Available (Online): <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-065e.htm>

<sup>211</sup> 2144/2002. (V.6.) Korm. határozat a Magyar Köztársaság biztonságpolitikájának alapelveiről (Governmental Resolution on the National Security Strategy of the Hungarian Republic).

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As a result of long, heated debates of the public and among various groups of experts, the reorganizing and restructuring process of the HDF has started slowly. The dominant attitudes of the public toward the issue were influenced by shifting emphasis on its perceptions of security threats and risks, its trust in international and national security institutions, and its ideas on the role and required functional and structural features of the armed forces.

The final, declared goal of Hungarian reform-attempts was to create a smaller, more flexible, more efficient, and much more cost-effective defence force. The overarching role of this envisioned new military would be to serve as a hedge against uncertainties. This ideal of the HDF would be to enable Hungary to exercise sovereignty over its territory, to appropriately respond to emergencies, to actively participate in the execution of old and new NATO missions; to receive and support the Alliance forces in times of crisis, and to participate in other kinds of international activities such as peace-support and humanitarian relief operations.

## PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THREATS

The new Hungarian political elite circles coming into power as a result of the Parliamentary elections in the spring of 1990 might have been characterized by basically a lack of a clear sense of priorities in terms of post-Cold war risks, threats, hazards and vulnerabilities. After the above-mentioned events took place, the mostly undifferentiated risks perception system has changed because of an increasing public need for clearer identification, prioritization, evaluation and open discussion of contemporary security threats.

One of the most seriously rated, contemporary external threats was related to the presumed restorational power aspirations of the Soviet Union and Russia, and fear of spillage of the civil war onto Hungarian national territory from neighbouring Serbia and Croatia. Regarding the perceived Soviet threat, one should not forget the fact that the last Soviet troops left Hungary in June 1991, thereby ending almost 47 years of military presence. On the other hand, the new Hungarian political elite was concerned both that the state and its institutional structure were too weak, and that a lack of a truly effective system of democratic control over the armed forces might result in serious internal threats. At the same time, many threats that did not appear to undermine the existence of the country, but nonetheless could have been very serious (e.g. crime,

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dix to the Governmental Resolution. Security on the threshold of a new Millennium. The National Security Strategy of the Hungarian Republic).



corruption, decline of living standards, environmental degradation) were evaluated as factors that had relatively little importance.

Secondly, the new political elite of post-Communist Hungary felt an urgent need to carry out profound reform in each segment of the security sector, which would result in a new and different architecture for national security provisions, able to provide enough protective power for the state, but operate under strong civilian control (Germann, 2001:7). The new political elite was aware that many former members of institutions of the three main pillars of the national security sector might actively resist their political, economic, cultural and societal reform-attempts. From this aspect it also seemed to be vital for the new political elite to establish and implement an effective system of democratic political control over the armed forces.

The temporarily poor economic performance of the country also caused fear among the Hungarian political elite and the public in the early 1990s. This fear was fueled from the commonly agreed hypothesis that quick economic development, based on simultaneous political and economic changes for the creation of an economic society, should have been the basic pillar for a successful transition. Parts of the public were aware that weak economic performance, characterized by galloping inflation, might be a threat with far-reaching negative developments like collapse of the domestic market; disappointment, existence of an inverted legitimacy pyramid, or even loss of the legitimacy of the national political authority – and might lead to serious social conflicts (Linz – Stepan, 1996 :437-457). Of course, theoretically there was a consensus on the necessity of almost an immediate shift towards more full-fledged market practices, but practically, the social costs of the fast and direct transition were evaluated as too high.

Later on, according to data from both 1999 and 2000, we could recognize a high level of needs regarding the livelihood (assurance of such basic factors, e.g.: home, workplace, food) and public security (a peaceful life in their place of residence, protection of their homes and streets against crime) in the field of ‘security’-related perceptions of the Hungarian adult population. On the other hand, we could detect positive trends in public evaluation of the development of military security (the protection of the country against external military threats). Furthermore, we found that both the importance of environmental security (protection of the health of people, water, air and soil against any kinds of hazardous/deleterious effects) and legal security (unhampered opportunities for everyone to freely practice democratic civil rights) have been revaluated in the public's security-related preference order.

	Evaluated by the respondents, as the most important elements of the phenomenon of security in 2000	N=987	
		Evaluated, as the most important	How can it be found in your life
1.	<b>Livelihood</b> (assurance of such basic factors like e.g. home, workplace, food)	3,7	2,3
2.	<b>Public security</b> (peaceful life of their place of residence, protection of their homes and streets against crime)	2,4	2,7
3.	<b>Military security</b> (the protection of the country against external military threats)	1,7	3,3
4.	<b>Environmental security</b> (protection of the health of the people, water, air and soil against any kinds of hazardous/deleterious effects)	1,7	1,5
5.	<b>Legal security</b> (unhampered opportunities for everyone to freely practice his/her democratic civil rights /e.g. right to vote, freedom of speech, right of combination and assembly/)	1,5	0,9

Sources: (Szonda, 1999: 11; Hargitai, 2001)

Another, contemporary perceived threat was related to Hungary's 'Near Abroad' (Binnendijk – Simon, 1996) during the first half of the 1990s. The detected potential 'security threats' were in fact constructed deliberately by certain extreme rightist Hungarian politicians who, similarly to their Roman and Slovak counterparts abroad, insisted on 'revealing the past' and tried to play on the 'bad neighbourhood'-card of a nationalist mood. First, they called the public's attention to the fact that: 'At the Treaty of Trianon in 1920, Hungary was severely truncated. Hungary lost two-thirds of its former territory, three-fifths of the total prewar population, and one-third of the Hungarian-speaking population' (Linz – Stepan, 1996: 315). Second, with reference to this historical fact, they not only called for accounting the achievement of human rights of the Hungarian minorities living abroad, but some of them also demanded more active 'protection' of the Hungarian minorities. These politicians blamed the Socialist-led government for signing bilateral treaties with government representatives of the neighbouring countries in order to close former historical disputes and meet the requirements of the EU, NATO, and OSCE; and called for resolving the issue of 'stateness' in an even irredentist way. But the majority of the Hungarian public evaluated the bilateral treaties in a similar way, like independent foreign observers:

‘NATO (and EU) enlargement has been successful in establishing incentives for aspiring members to resolve border and ethnic minority issues.’ Both treaties have marginalized nationalist extremists and helped transform Hungarian minorities from being a 'bloc' to becoming a 'bridge' for Euro-Atlantic integration (Binnendijk – Simon, 1996:1)’.

## ATTITUDES TOWARDS NATO MEMBERSHIP

In February 1999 and in February 2000, public opinion surveys on security issues were conducted in Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary. The surveys were carried out on behalf of the Central European Opinion Research Group Foundation (CEORG).<sup>212</sup> Since the three countries became full members of NATO in April 1999, the first survey presented a picture of the main features of attitudes of adult Polish, Czech and Hungarian respondents before accession of their countries to NATO, while the second survey gave us an overall picture of the typical attitudes towards the Alliance after the full membership was achieved, and after the ‘humanitarian intervention’ in Kosovo (i.e. the air campaign and the ‘Operation Joint Guardian’) ended.

According to the findings of the first survey, the majority of the Hungarian population (similarly to the Polish) was supportive of the efforts of the Hungarian political and military leaders to join NATO. For Hungarians, joining NATO seemed to be the long desired final goal of rejoining the Western community. Consequently, it is understandable that Hungarians were strongly committed to a strong transatlantic relationship at that time, and firmly supported US engagement on the European continent. From their point of view, NATO enlargement was to strengthen the transatlantic link. In April 1999, Hungary became a full member of NATO, along with the Czech Republic and Poland. Only a few weeks after officially joining the Alliance, Hungary had to act adversely to its former ally, Russia, by blocking a shipment of Russian fuel

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<sup>212</sup> The Central European Opinion Research Group (CEORG) is a common research foundation of three major public opinion research institutes from the Czech Republic (Centrum pro výzkum veřejného mínění, [CVVM](#)), Poland (Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej, [CBOS](#)) and Hungary (Társadalomkutatási Intézet, [TÁRKI](#)). Since January 1999, When founded, this common research institute carried out many cross-national empirical comparative researches in the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary. The methodology employed in the survey regarding attitudes toward NATO membership allowed the collection of national representative data of Polish, Czech and Hungarian adult permanent residents. (The national data sets represented the adult population of the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary according to their age, sex, educational background and living place. In the 1999 research the national samples consisted of 1000 people in the Czech Republic, 1100 people in Poland and 1500 people in Hungary. In the 2000 research CEORG asked 1100 people from Poland, 1036 people from the Czech Republic and 1511 people from Hungary).

and food, sent to Yugoslavia during the Kosovo crisis. A great portion of the Hungarian public was afraid of the possible far-reaching consequences of this step in further relations with Russia, but despite their personal fears, they supported the decision of the government.

Data from February 2000 showed that the majority of Hungarians remained mostly supportive of the country's efforts to actively participate in the political-military organization, as in both years 61% of the Hungarians fully supported these efforts. Accordingly, approximately one tenth of the population did not approve of such efforts in 1999 and 2000. More than one out of five of Hungarians had no opinion on this matter.

<b>Do you personally support the membership of Poland/ the Czech Republic/ Hungary in NATO or not? February 2000</b>			
<b>Answer-alternatives:</b>	<b>Poland</b>	<b>The Czech Republic</b>	<b>Hungary</b>
1. Yes, I do	63%	50%	61%
2. I do not care	18%	18%	23%
3. I am against it	12%	26%	10%
4. I do not know / I do not want to answer	7%	6%	6%

Source: CEORG 2000

<b>Which of the following statements is closest to your view on the membership of Poland/the Czech Republic/Hungary in NATO? February 2002</b>			
<b>Answer-alternatives:</b>	<b>Poland</b>	<b>Czech Rep.</b>	<b>Hungary</b>
1. NATO-membership is a guarantee of our independence	56 %	38 %	41 %
2. NATO-membership is a new form of our submission to a foreign power	29 %	47 %	44 %
3. I do not know/ I do not want to answer	15 %	15 %	15 %

Source: CEORG 2000

We should not forget the fact that Hungary is the only new NATO-member that has common borders with the former Yugoslavia, and should care about approximately 350,000 ethnic Hungarians, living in the Northern province of Serbia (Vojvodina). That is why Hungary, which first indicated its willingness to contribute to KFOR with technical or medical units (in harmony with NATO's plans for the original KFOR), had to later balk at NATO for using its territory for a possible

ground campaign against Yugoslavia, and that is, why Budapest had to reject the prospect of deploying Hungarian troops that might find themselves facing many ethnic Hungarians in the Yugoslav army, in Vojvodina.

For many Hungarians the above experiences brought up the question of what sort of a role would NATO like to assign to their country – whether Hungary should once again play the role of a self-sacrificing ‘end-state’ of a coalition formed around a new imperial centre, whose pledge would be unconditional surrendering and giving up its independence in planning and developing its armed forces. Another question was, whether the country should also prepare itself to be one of the main potential regional providers of NATO peacekeepers in the Balkans. If yes, how could and how should Hungary transform its defence abilities to meet the requirements of NATO’s planned goals? Researchers found that there were two dominant, closely related streams of opinion among adult Hungarian residents, which were similar to the viewpoint of Czechs respondents. The first main stream of opinion stated that ‘NATO-membership is a new form of our submission to a foreign power’ (44 % of the respondents thought this almost half a year after the conflict in Kosovo was over). The second main opinion stream supported the idea that ‘NATO-membership is a guarantee of our independence’ (two out of five accordingly, 41% of adult Hungarian residents held this point of view).

Results of other contemporary empirical researches also supported the hypothesis that the prevailing opinion amongst Hungarians, similarly to the Polish, is the following: NATO membership is the most effective way to ensure the country's independence, security and stability! We should not forget the cautionary fact that the majority (60%) of Poles, and significant portion (44%) of Hungarians still believed, at the time of the survey, (in 2000) that: Russia would try to rebuild its sphere of influence in the Central-Eastern-European region within 5-10 years. In addition, only a smaller portion of the Hungarian population believed that EU membership without NATO membership could guarantee security and stability for Hungary – and only a portion of the people believed that only neutrality could best guarantee the country's security and stability, since our NATO-membership might increase the danger of Hungary's involvement in a military conflict.<sup>213</sup>

The political and military experiences of the Kosovo war gave new impetus to debates on a more appropriate future distribution of responsibilities, costs and risks among NATO allies. The above experiences

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<sup>213</sup> Lakossági vélemények a NATO-tagsággal kapcsolatban három visegrádi országban. Magyarország, Csehország és Lengyelország. (Public Opinion Regarding the NATO Accession Process in Three Countries of the Visegrad Group). (February 2000). Budapest: TARKI, pp. 3-4.

called for a more pragmatic division of labor between multiple institutions of the European 'security architecture'. Furthermore, the Kosovo war, one of NATO's largest out-of-area combat operations so far, reaffirmed the commitments of the United States to NATO, and reinforced the position of the US in the new transatlantic bargain with its European NATO allies. The war has clearly shown that the basic features of the relationship between the US and its European NATO allies has changed slightly as a result of the spectacular external and internal adaptation process of the Alliance: the European NATO-allies remained dependent on the US not only for political leadership, but also for decisive military effectiveness in this crisis situation.

In spite of the above, as many Hungarians saw it, NATO's humanitarian intervention in Kosovo had a positive impact on the long-term viability of NATO because it confirmed that the Alliance was able to redefine itself not only as the core of an enlarged and reshaped security community, but also as a more and more suitable tool for crisis-management in the Euro-Atlantic region. Furthermore, to the majority of the Polish and Hungarians, the experience of the humanitarian intervention demonstrated that the Alliance remains and should remain the central element of the European 'security architecture' – consequently, according to them, it is altogether beneficial to belong to NATO, because NATO-membership secures the peace and safety of their country.

In Hungary fewer residents support the view that NATO membership is too expensive than those who don't. In addition, a significant portion of the Hungarian population thought that the country's military (which had mainly old Soviet military equipment, close to obsolete and incapable of joint operations with present NATO-members) would benefit when the country joined NATO. According to the public expectations, the relative 'weight' of the country would also increase in the international political arena. In addition, the public also expected some kind of improvement in attracting Western investors to Hungary.

Which of the following statements is closest to your view on the membership of Poland/the Czech Republic/Hungary in NATO? February 2000			
Answer	Poland	Czech Rep.	Hungary
1. NATO-membership secures peace and safety for Poland/the Czech Republic/Hungary	60 %	45 %	56 %
2. NATO-membership increases the possibility of our involvement in an armed conflict	25 %	40 %	29 %
3. I do not know/ I do not want to answer	15 %	15 %	15 %

Source: CEORG 2002

There was another question raised mainly by not so enthusiastic (or realist?) Western defence analysts and independent intellectuals from the applicant countries. Some of them recognized a hidden trend in the public of the applicant countries, characterized by some kind of revival of the former beliefs in expectation of gaining advantages of a post-Cold War peace dividend (Sandler – Hartley, 1995: 279) under the institutional umbrella of the Alliance. These defence analysts and intellectuals openly questioned whether the new allies, who had openly pronounced their willingness to pay, would be able to contribute effectively to the activities of the Alliance, or would become ‘free-’ or ‘easy-riders’ (Cornes – Sandler, 1984: 580) inside NATO, but in reality, did not have the appropriate resources to do so. Many of the critics warned that these players would only like to enjoy the benefits of the membership and collective actions of the Alliance without any serious contribution to the costs of the ‘common goods’, such as involvement in risky ‘Non-Article 5’ peace-keeping, peace-making or peace-enforcement operations of NATO.<sup>214</sup>

According to data from the period of the Kosovo war, when NATO’s political and military decision-makers seriously considered the possibility of deploying land forces on the ground too, the Hungarian public, in spite of its very serious anxieties regarding the possible fate of ethnic Hungarians in Vojvodina and the likely dangerous consequences of its decisiveness, seemed to be relatively supportive for possible NATO intervention.

Considering the mixed memories of the three former Warsaw Pact-, and new NATO-member countries from the near past, who had to ‘entertain’ foreign (Soviet) troops for decades, it seemed to be rather interesting to ask the opinion of the Czech, Polish, and Hungarian citizens on possible stationing of foreign NATO troops on their territories. According to research data from 2000, a significant portion of the respondents in Poland (55%), the Czech Republic (59%) and Hungary (54%) shared the opinion that foreign NATO troops should not be stationed in their countries. On the other hand, a surprisingly high portion (40%) of Hungarians would accept the presence of the allied troops on their territory, having in mind that there was no conflict for years in Taszar, at the US /NATO-air force base.<sup>215</sup>

On the basis of some empirical data from September 11, we can also hypothesize that the Hungarian public is not naïve, but well-prepared for almost any kind of consequences of our NATO-membership and engagement of the US, as a superpower. Actually, the US Ambassador,

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<sup>214</sup> Landay, Jonathan S. (1997) US: ‘No Free Lunch’ for NATO’s New Members, *The Christian Science Monitor*, 1997/10/07

<sup>215</sup> ‘During two years of Operations Joint Endeavor and Joint Guard, Taszar can claim Europe’s largest airlift mission since World War II.’ Source: Taszar Air Base.

accredited to Hungary, stressed her deep emotions retrospectively for very human and helpful reactions of both the Hungarian state officials and the average people in the difficult days, after September 11, 2001.<sup>216</sup> Indeed, the terrorist attack against the USA did touch the Hungarian public deeply. According to the results of a contemporary research, carried out by phone interviews on the day after the attack, every second adult Hungarian respondent was aware that either they or their close relatives could easily have been a victim of a terrorist attack. Furthermore, 60 % of the respondents felt anxiety that the Hungarian economy would be faced with serious challenges related to the various, direct or indirect results of the terrorist attack. Moreover, the overwhelming majority of respondents (83 %) said the day after the terrorist attack that the USA was strong enough and that it would be able to recover soon. Approximately 74 % of the Hungarian respondents said they were almost sure that the US would launch a counterattack, as a typical response. Regarding Europe and Hungary: 67% of the respondents predicted some kind of increase in the strategic and military importance of the EU.

A relatively significant portion (52%) of the Hungarian respondents thought that as a member of the international community, it would have to prepare itself for terrorist attacks all around the world in the foreseeable future. Approximately one third (28%) of the respondents envisioned terrorist attacks in Hungary in the next two years.

On the one hand, 89 % of the respondents would not allow Hungarian soldiers to be sent e.g. to Afghanistan, as a part of an expeditionary force against terrorism. On the other hand, more than half (58%) of the Hungarian respondents, as good allies respecting their responsibilities, supported the admission of Hungarian airspace for the US and its other NATO allies, who might want to attack countries that support terrorists.

A significant portion of Hungarians are in favour of a robust enlargement, even in the case of Romania and Ukraine, more than two-thirds of the Hungarian residents, outnumbering its opponents, are in favour of this decision. However, Hungarians do not appear to be so enthusiastic about the prospect of further NATO expansion. Many of the Hungarian respondents questioned what the prospective new members could and should contribute to the NATO military, since the new applicants should have the appropriate resources in the new security environment.

#### CONFIDENCE IN INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

For Hungary, rejoining the family of developed Western democracies has been a long, multiphased process. Hungary was the first ex-

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<sup>216</sup> See: Ambassador Nancy Goodman Brinker (2002) A time to recall and reflect – Opinion, *The Budapest Sun* (September 5, 2002; Vol. 10., Issue 36).



Warsaw Pact country that was admitted by the Council of Europe for its convincing democratic performance, as early as in 1990. Appreciating the country's successful economic transformation, OECD granted Hungary full membership in 1996. Since Hungary joined NATO in April 1999, the accession to the European Union remained the final act of complete integration. By the summer of 2001, Hungary had met 22 of the 31 terms it must complete to gain entry in the European Union. The country hopes to join the EU in 2004.

As the public evaluates it, Hungary stands at the threshold of a re-uniting Europe, for the first time in history by peaceful means. Hungary would like to join the EU at the earliest date and under the best possible conditions. The current government expects to complete the accession talks by the end of this year and to become a full-right EU-member by the 1st of January 2004. Hungary is striving for full-fledged membership on the basis of equal treatment, rights and obligations. According to the overall evaluation of the 2002 Regular Report on Hungary's Progress Towards Accession, issued by the Commission of the European Communities in Bruxelles, 9 October 2002, Hungary's prospects are good for early full membership in the EU.<sup>217</sup>

Insofar as the policies of the enlarged EU are concerned, Hungarians are strongly convinced that the US and Europe have many more converging interests than diverging ones. Therefore the Hungarian citizens support a policy approach where any potential point of tension is treated according to its relevance. As the Hungarian public evaluates it, neither of the parties (i.e. neither EU, nor the US) must allow the difficulties to cast a long lasting shadow on the fundamentally positive and stable Trans-Atlantic relationship.

<b>How would you vote in a referendum on EU accession of your country (Poland/ the Czech Republic/ Hungary)?</b>				
Ord.	Date of the survey	Changes of public <b>support</b> for EU-membership in the three countries		
		<b>Poland</b>	<b>The Czech Republic</b>	<b>Hungary</b>
1.	May 1999	55 %	45 %	73 %
2.	May 2000	59 %	49 %	68 %
3.	Sept. 2000	55 %	51 %	69 %
4.	March 2001	55 %	45 %	65 %
5.	May 2002	62 %	47 %	72 %

Source: Public Support Towards Joining EU in the East-Central Europe, a survey carried out by the Central European Opinion Research Group Foundation (CEORG) (Budapest: TARKI, May 2002)

<sup>217</sup> Source: 2002 Regular Report on Hungary's Progress Towards Accession. Bruxelles: Commission of the European Communities (Issued at: 9.10.2002.) SEC (2002) 1404.

As proved by survey data, derived from answers of the Czech, Polish and Hungarian respondents regarding their intentions to vote in favour of EU-membership in the future referendum, Hungarians remained strongly pro-EU.

According to the findings, compared to other countries, support for joining the EU is higher in Hungary and Poland than in the Czech Republic. On the other hand, the Hungarian public, similarly to the Polish, and others from CEE-countries, sees the EU-membership as a symbol of 'belonging again to the developed Europe', and as an opportunity to seek a higher level of security and better living standards. In addition, as another study found: '...the Hungarians not only declare the strongest support for integration, but also highly evaluate current relations between their country and the European Union. As in 1999, the largest percentage of Hungarians describes these relations as equally beneficial for their country and the Union. Almost one in four describes them as beneficial for Hungary in the first place'.<sup>218</sup>

However, I am afraid that these overwhelmingly positive attitudes of the Hungarians are not really grounded on sufficient awareness of all the possible implications of the prospective EU membership, since real debate on all the full detailed pros and cons of accession in the near future has not yet begun. As I could recognize, the national political elites, both in power and in opposition, remained relatively united in their acceptance of Hungarian EU membership, as an objective. Currently we can only hear a few opinions from the political arena of the parties, which would openly discuss their reservations about the potential side-effects of the EU-enlargement for Hungarians.

At the same time, survey data, focusing on migration potentials of Hungarians, showed a contradictory picture of the attitudes of the respondents. First, many of them were not so satisfied with the possible future restrictions planned by certain member states of the EU to obstruct the free flow of a cheap workforce from CEE-countries to wealthier Western countries. On the other hand, recent data has shown that, only a little portion of the adult population of the new NATO-member, and prospective EU-member states would be interested in working abroad. (Accordingly, 10% of Poles, 6% of Hungarians, and 4% of the Czech respondents said, they will 'certainly try' to find a job in the EU after their country becomes developed enough to reach full EU-membership.<sup>219</sup>)

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<sup>218</sup> On The Way to The European Union. Excerpt from 'Central European Public Opinion', a special issue of 'Polish Public Opinion', created and published by CBOS. (September 2000) [http://www.ceorg-europe.org/research/2000\\_09.html](http://www.ceorg-europe.org/research/2000_09.html)

<sup>219</sup> Source: 'Most Poles, Czechs and Hungarians don't want to move to EU – poll.' CEORG in Press, EUbusiness, 28 May 2001.

## THE PUBLIC ON THE NATIONAL MILITARY

The Hungarian respondents have a relatively higher level of trust towards the State President (58%) and the Constitutional Court (47%). The national military has received, with four other institutions, middle-low level evaluation of trust. 27 % of the Hungarian respondents answered that he/she 'absolutely' or 'rather' trusts military. Meanwhile, the Polish respondents seemed more satisfied with and trustful towards their political and social institutions.

Heated social debates in Hungary were related to the basic question of how large and what kind of armed forces does the country's security require. While the duration of the mandatory duty of conscripted soldiers was reduced first from 18 to 12, than to 9, and after that to the present 6 months<sup>220</sup>, more and more experts and representatives of the public raised the question regarding the possibilities of abolishment of mandatory military service, and establishment of an all-volunteer military force.

According to data from public opinion polls, carried out between 1992 and 2002, we could separate three main periods in development of the public's attitudes and preferences regarding the future Hungarian military:

1. During the first period, between 1992 and 1996, the majority of people supported the idea of the conscripted military.
2. From 1997 to 1999 we could recognize some kind of equilibrium between the two main streams in public opinion regarding possible approaches to the basic principles of (re)establishing a modern military in Hungary, capable of providing adequate answers for contemporary challenges.
3. Third, we could recognize a shift in public opinion towards favouring all-volunteer forces.

In December 2001, 40% of the Hungarian respondents thought that an all-volunteer, professional military could be established in Hungary within 5 years (Eszenyi, 2001:4).<sup>221</sup> Meanwhile, the political and military decision-makers have taken steps toward the transformation of the HDF into an all-volunteer force; a gradual increase in the budgetary number of contracted soldiers (as a

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<sup>220</sup> As Jeffrey Simon correctly noted: 'Confusion prevails over the appropriate length of conscription for each CEE country. However, terms of 6 or 7 months can only prepare reserve forces and are not adequate to meet operational requirements' (Simon, 2000).

<sup>221</sup> Another 18% of the respondents evaluated this outcome very likely after 5-10 years, and 4% after a 10-15 year period. On the other hand, 23% of the respondents do not want this kind of development of the military, and 15% remain undecided regarding the possible outcome (Eszenyi, 2001:4).

framework for future planning), and continuous decrease in the number of conscripted soldiers. Furthermore, the integrated MoD and General Staff have launched an intensive recruiting campaign for filling in the spots, planned for contracted soldiers in 2001.

But we should not forget the fact that many of the supporters of the professional military seem to be rather ambivalent in their attitudes, because they admit presumed or really existing advantages of the conscripted militaries, too. The opinion of many of them seems similar to the practice-oriented approach of Jeffrey Simon: 'In moving to all-volunteer forces, CEE partners will lose an instrument for shaping the citizens of young democracies (such as Lithuania) and manpower pools from which to recruit extended-service volunteers (like Germany)' (Simon, 2000). However, when comparing data from November 1999 to public opinion poll results from December 2001, we can recognize a shift in opinions towards the professional military.

As we could recognize, more than four fifths of the respondents, representing the adult Hungarian population (according to age, sex, educational background and residence), thought that the professional military would establish many new workplaces, and more than three-quarters of the respondents evaluated the soldiers from the all-volunteer militaries professionally better prepared, then their counterparts in the conscripted militaries. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents stated that they could recognize a trend of efforts in building all-volunteer, professional militaries in the NATO-member countries, which would be more effective, than 'two-tier' militaries of the post-Communist CEE-countries, which are '...divided between elite cadres capable of operating alongside NATO Allies and the conscript-based bulk of the armed forces whose operational effectiveness is degrading' (Cottey – Edmunds – Forster, 2002). On the basis of our experiences, we can say that usually higher educational backgrounds, younger generations, residence in larger cities and leading positions in the workplace make it very likely that someone prefers the establishment of an all-volunteer armed force. According to our data, public support of compulsory military service became more direct and stable by February 2000.

As we could recognize from survey data from 2001, MoD-supported research has been made to collect information for backing decisions regarding further improvement of legal, financial, and logistical frameworks for the contracted service: 16% of the currently conscripted soldiers, 16% of the middle school students, and 32% of the young unemployed men (aged 18-25 years) would choose to sign a contract with the HDF, to serve as a contracted soldier.<sup>222</sup> The detailed

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<sup>222</sup> Source: Alapkutatas a szerzodeses katonai szolgaltatrol. Budapest, ECHO. Carried out by the ECHO Oktataskutato Muhely. The survey was ordered by the HM

results of the above surveys, on possible motivating factors of potential target groups in society and the military, were used to increase the level of salary and, slowly but surely, to start a process of improving living and working standards of those who signed a contract with the military from January 2002.

## CONCLUSION

This paper focused on drawing some typical features of the development of public opinion on security-, defence- and the military-related issues in the new NATO-member Hungary, between 1999-2002. The major conclusions of this analysis were, as follows:

1. The new challenges of the post-Cold War strategic environment raised fundamental questions about political and security reorientation of the post-Communist Hungary. After the political 'regime change', and even before joining NATO, a general reform of the security sector started in Hungary. Its main goal was to create more effective, transparent and accountable institutions of the national security sector. The reform of the security sector runs parallel with and was influenced by the establishment process of the vital political, legal, economical and social institutions of the new Hungarian democracy between 1988 and 1999. This fact resulted in changes in the public opinion regarding security, defence and military-related issues.

2. At the beginning, the new, post-Communist Hungarian political elite circles did not really have a clear sense of priorities in terms of post-Cold war risks, threats, hazards and vulnerabilities. Afterwards, the undifferentiated risks perception system has changed because of an increasing public need for clearer identification, prioritization, evaluation and open discussion of contemporary security threats. In the early 1990s observers could detect the impacts of the so called 'transition syndrome' in Hungary, too.

3. The Hungarian Defence Forces (HDF) was one of the most important targets of the Hungarian security sector reforms. The profound changes transformed the system of the civil-military relations, and shifted emphasis on the tasks, functions, structure, and size of the HDF. The reformers' ultimate goal was to establish a modern, smaller, more flexible, more efficient, and much more cost-effective defence force. This 'post-Cold-war'-type, professionally and technically well-prepared military organization should be basically convergent with its host society, and exists under strong civilian control. The overarching role of this envisioned new military would have been to serve as a hedge against

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Zrinyi Kommunikációs Kht. Samples : conscripted soldiers (N=578), middle school students (N=2220), young unemployed men, aged 18-25 years, (N=500).

uncertainties, and enable Hungary to exercise sovereignty over its territory.

4. Full-right membership in the EU and NATO became a highly appreciated 'national objective' in Hungary. Most of the Hungarians, similarly to citizens of other post-Communist CEE-countries, have looked forward to receiving mainly advantages of the membership in the major supranational Western institutions. One of the common arguments for gaining support for EU- and NATO-membership, proposed often by the unified national political elites and supported strongly by the media, was that the accession process to the above major trans-atlantic institutions would bring not only economic benefits, and almost immediate international prestige to the newcomer countries, but it also would secure peace and safety to the country. Furthermore, a significant portion of Hungarians is in favour of a further robust NATO-enlargement (even in case of Slovakia, Romania and Ukraine).

5. In Hungary, the common viewpoint was (and still is) that NATO-membership is the most effective way to ensure the country's independence. The majority of the Hungarian population was supportive of joining NATO. For Hungarians, joining NATO, a prominent representative of the Western community, meant a long desired final goal. Furthermore, Hungarians were strongly committed to a strong transatlantic relationship at that time, and firmly supported the US engagement on the European continent. From their point of view, the first round of NATO enlargement was to strengthen the trans-atlantic link in 1999.

6. After Hungary joined NATO in 1999, political decision-makers added new tasks to the previous, traditional national defence-related tasks of the HDF. These tasks were derived from two main resources: from re-assessment of new threats perceived by the international security environment, and from our NATO membership and commitments to other international organizations. As a result of long, heated debates in the public and among various groups of experts, the reorganization and restructuring process of the HDF has slowly begun. The dominant attitudes of the public toward the issue were influenced by shifting emphasis in its perceptions of security threats and risks, its trust in the international and national security institutions, and its ideas on the roles, and required functional and structural features of the armed forces.

7. The majority of Hungarians remained basically supportive of the Alliance, even during and after the humanitarian intervention of the US-led Alliance in Kosovo. The Hungarian government and public, as good allies, supported the admission of Hungarian airspace for US and other NATO allies – bearing the potential risks, resulted in by our only 'front-line NATO-state' and 'intermediate staging based country'-status, and in spite of the fact that Hungarian minority-populated areas were also bombed by the allied NATO air forces in the neighbouring Northern Serbian Vojvodina province.

8. According to several public critics, HDF could not really meet many interoperability requirements of the NATO forces during the Kosovo campaign. On the basis of the rather negative experiences from the Kosovo war, a bottom-up strategic review of the HDF began from the fall of 1999, which aimed to serve as a basis for a three-stage general military reform, outlined in a ten-year long plan. Meanwhile, after long-lasting social debates, we could recognize a shift in public opinion towards favouring the establishment of an all-volunteer, professional military in Hungary.

9. Hungarians were and have remained strongly pro-EU. A large portion of Hungarians describe these relations as equally beneficial for their country and for the EU. However, I am afraid that these overwhelmingly positive attitudes of the Hungarians are not really grounded on sufficient awareness of all the possible implications of the prospective EU membership, since real debate on all the full detailed pros and cons of the near future accession has not started yet.

Unfortunately, the reform process of the HDF, aimed at creating a modern defence force and carried out in five main waves between 1989-2002, turned out to be not as successful, as had been expected. The Hungarian public evaluation of the results of the originally planned overall revitalization of the armed forces, the real efficiency of the long-lasting reorganization and restructuring process, the outcomes of the efforts towards a really effective cooperation with the old neighbours and the new allies during the preparation and execution of the multi-national crisis-response and crisis-management operations have proved to be rather contradictory until now, as well. Consequently, the new, Socialist-led government, which took over power after the general elections in 2002, has decided and declared its strong determination in restructuring and modernizing the HDF into an all-volunteer, professional military (until 2006) to meet all the NATO-requirements.

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## **Attitude of the Population of Ukraine Towards National Security**

**Mykola Churylov**

During its years of independence, Ukraine has come a long way from a totalitarian society to a developing civil society. During these years of independence, both the social-political life of the country and consciousness of its citizens have changed significantly. These changes (positive as well as negative) have influenced all spheres of life of the society. In this article, we will analyse only one of the issues that the public faces – the attitude of the population towards issues of national security.

The concept of national security is many-sided and covers all aspects of life of each state: relations with other states, which are determined by a state's foreign policy, guarantees of territorial integrity, security, constitutional rights and freedom of its citizens; protection of personal interests and state interests from criminal infringement; development of the national economy; national healthcare; education etc. We will not cover the whole range of problems related to national security, rather we will only analyse public opinion in the country, which characterises the direction of foreign state policy and the relations between Ukraine and international social institutions that ensure the country's security.

Social studies, which are regularly conducted by the company SOCIS, show that, according to public opinion in Ukraine, state authorities should pursue active and constructive foreign policy in all directions. This was the opinion of most of the respondents (more than 63 percent) in the summer of 2000. In order to evaluate the importance of European orientation in the consciousness of adult Ukrainians, we must analyse the whole picture of their foreign policy orientations and must consider the population's orientation toward the East and West taken as a coordinate system.

In the consciousness of the broad population, a perspective of foreign policy activity of Ukraine is considered in the light of the official doctrine of balance. That is why it is not surprising that most participants of the studies carried out in the country prefer an active and constructive foreign policy in all directions. Speaking of adherents

of Western or Eastern orientations in foreign policy pursued by Ukraine, we can say that, according to the research's findings in February 2000, certain results favoured Ukraine's integration into Europe – so to say into the West. Analysis showed significant differences in the respondents' opinions from different regions of Ukraine. In Table 1, answers are not presented from respondents who were not able to answer the suggested question concretely (about 12 percent in general array).

**Table 1. Distribution of Foreign Policy Preferences  
of Respondents by Regions**  
(Data in percentage)

Regional distribution	Oriented to the West	Oriented to the East	Balanced
Kiev	12	3	72
Central region	7	4	71
Eastern region	8	7	74
Western region	27	1	65
Southern region	12	9	66
Total	13	5	70

First of all, we should mention that orientations toward a balanced foreign policy of the country prevail in all regions of Ukraine. Pro-Western orientations are pronounced enough only in two regions: in the West of Ukraine and in Kiev. According to analysis on the basis of the type of settlements, the urban population is more inclined to support a pro-Western course in foreign policy than the rural population (14 percent against 10 percent). Besides, the older the respondents are, the less the share of supporters of pro-Western foreign policy. In particular, almost every fifth respondent among the youth up to 25 years of age supports a pro-Western orientation. At the same time, this number is 7 percent less among pensioners. On the contrary, among the respondents who belong to the latter category, every tenth respondent is in favour of a pro-Eastern direction in foreign policy (only 4 percent of the young respondents up to 25 years of age share this opinion).

It is necessary to note that the population has a strong orientation towards contacts with foreign countries. Namely, 17 percent of the respondents give priority to establishing relations with EU countries (European Union) and 18 percent of the respondents support co-operation with other countries in Europe and North America (the USA, Canada). At the same time, monitoring foreign policy orientations of the Ukrainian population shows that the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States), as a model of organisation

for international co-operation, is becoming less popular. On the contrary, there are more and more Ukrainians who show a preference for a Slav bloc of former Soviet states (Russia, Byelorussia, Ukraine) and the findings suggested below prove this observation.

**Table 2. Way of Development of Ukraine that Respondents Prefer**  
(in percentage)

<b>Foreign policy orientations</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>
To develop relations in the frameworks of the CIS – first of all	41	39	32	24	24	18	15	16
To strengthen relations mainly with Russia	18	15	14	5	5	5	4	7
To strengthen the East-Slav Bloc (Russia, Byelorussia, Ukraine) – first of all	-	-	-	24	24	24	23	29
To create a Baltic-Black Sea union	2	1	1	1	1	1	-	-
To establish relations with developed Western countries – first of all	13	14	16	14	13	16	17	13
To take into account its own resources and to strengthen independence	13	14	19	16	18	20	26	21
Different regions of Ukraine should choose their own ways	4	4	5	4	5	4	4	3
Difficult to answer	10	11	12	11	9	10	10	9

We should note that the option of an East-Slav bloc was not suggested to the respondents in the period between 1994-1996 (as this

idea was not publicly known at the time). This is the reason that the data regarding this direction of Ukrainian foreign policy is not presented in Table 2 for this time period. It should be mentioned that the polls' participants had the possibility of singling out only one vector in foreign policy. The idea of creating an East-Slav bloc was reanimated after the declaration of the union between Russia and Byelorussia in December 1999. More than one third of the respondents noted the positive influence of the union between Russia and Byelorussia on the future of Ukraine despite the fact that in the opinion of half of the respondents interviewed in June 2000, such a union was of no importance for Ukraine, and according to 17 percent of the respondents, this union would have a negative effect.

As for foreign policy orientations, public opinion of decisions taken by the governments of Russia and Byelorussia is, to a considerable extent, influenced by the regions where the respondents live and by their nationality. Most adherents of this kind of a union are ethnic Russians and respondents who live in Crimea, in the southern and eastern regions of Ukraine, as well as Ukrainians, who live in Kiev. However, in the north western and western regions, the majority of the population is against this union. We must also note that the majority of adherents of this idea are supporters of left political parties. Generally, they are oriented toward a pro-Russian vector in foreign policy. Most participants of the poll (59 percent) were inclined to believe that it is most expedient to maintain friendly and partner relations with both Russia and Byelorussia without joining the union they had formed. But, according to 29 percent of the respondents, it would be better for Ukraine to join this union.

When we talk about foreign policy orientations of Ukrainian citizens, about their sympathy or antipathy to certain countries, about their attitude towards economic and other help provided to Ukraine by other states etc., we must not forget about Russia even if it is not discussed separately.

There are many factors that influence the attitude towards Russia as Ukraine's partner, but among all these factors, we must single out the most important. First of all, it must be mentioned that about 7 million Ukrainians live on the territory of Russia, and about 10 million Russians live in Ukraine. Every one of these people has numerous relatives, friends and acquaintances in the neighbouring country. Moreover, these two countries are united by ancient history- they were parts of one state – the Russian Empire and then of the Soviet Union. The second important factor that influences the attitude of Ukrainian citizens towards Russia is Ukraine's dependence on Russia for energy supplies that has resulted in a growing debt of Ukraine to Russia. These two factors are the main reasons that more than half of the respondents (almost 53 percent) believe that, first of all, it is useful for

Ukraine to develop its relations with Russia. But every third respondent thinks that it is expedient for Ukraine to be also oriented towards other countries that could supply gas and oil to Ukraine and as a result of this, Ukraine could then become independent of Russia.

We should also mention the fact that some contradictions in thinking are typical for the mass consciousness of Ukrainian citizens. On the one hand, the respondents give a negative evaluation of the political course of the Russian government towards Ukraine, and on the other, more than one half of the respondents (54 percent) are in favour of establishing closer relations with Russia as the main exporter of energy sources for Ukrainian economy. We can assume that such an attitude is influenced not only by the wish to develop mutually beneficial relations with our northern neighbour but also by certain precautions against worsening relations with this nuclear state. Such a supposition is proved by the fact that the public foresees a possible threat to Ukraine first of all from such nuclear states as the United States of America and Russia. That is why the number of respondents who consider Russia a potential threat either decreases or increases depending on the level of intensification of Russian military operations carried out in Chechnya. If we consider the last terrorist attacks in Russia and the outburst of a military confrontation in the North Caucasus, fears of Ukrainians that Russian instability could be “exported” to Ukraine become more justifiable. At the same time, the military conflict in the former Yugoslavia revived the image of the USA as a potential enemy in the mass consciousness of a considerable number of Ukrainians.

Moreover, as a result of the conflict in Yugoslavia and NATO intervention, the participants of our polls evaluated the existing situation as very dangerous and threatening to the national security of Ukraine. In our opinion, as a result of the factors mentioned above, in 1999, Ukrainians felt more threatened by the USA and Germany than earlier years. On the contrary, respondents weren’t worried about neighbouring countries that did not possess nuclear weapons.

Summing up, we may conclude that a pro-Russian vector dominates in the foreign policy orientations of the Ukrainian population. It would be thoughtless to consider this orientation stable and permanent. We can and should speak of factors that may influence and may have a negative influence on the attitude of our citizens towards Russia. In the opinion of only 6 percent of the respondents, the policy pursued by the Ukrainian government regarding Russia meets our country’s national interests and guarantees national security. At the same time, 40 percent of the respondents had opposite views and another 41 percent of the respondents could not answer this question.

When analysing the foreign policy orientation of the Ukrainian population, we should not forget that ever since Ukraine became independent, certain politicians, political journalists and correspondents stressed the unique role of Ukraine in the system of European security. In their opinion, Ukraine plays a “buffer” role in relations between the countries of Western Europe and Russia. This role is becoming more important with NATO’s extension closer to the Russian borders. On one hand, this information has led part of the population to believe in the unique importance of Ukraine for the European Union and NATO, and on the other hand, it has made most of the population concerned. The role of a “fly between a hammer and an anvil” is rather dangerous, taking into account that neither Russia nor the EU countries or NATO have guaranteed safety to this “fly”. In our opinion, this is the reason that most Ukrainian citizens speak of a balanced foreign policy of our country.

Speaking of Ukraine’s security, we should note that despite constant statements made by Western countries that Ukraine has never been considered a “buffer” territory between the West and Russia, if relations between Russia and NATO were to change in a positive way, Ukraine could become less important for the West in terms of security. A transformation in Ukraine’s position is quite logical but not objective and is beyond the limits of Ukraine’s subjective possibilities. However, there is another factor: the West, which will continue to consider Russia through its historical past, still has a chance to “guarantee” stability in new relations with Moscow by seeking a more clearly defined status of Kiev in the sphere of Euro-Atlantic security. That is why, in this case, it is quite possible that Ukraine may keep its “buffer” status between the West and Russia, but the meaning of this notion may be quite different for Kiev’s foreign policy. Today, it is rather difficult to foresee the character of changes in relations between the West and Ukraine because it is necessary to take into account quite a large number of problems connected with these relations, which still have not been resolved.

Speaking of the foreign policy orientation of the country’s population, we have the right to suppose that every country has a certain image that corresponds to the main features of character of its inhabitants. Taking this statement into consideration, it is interesting to study how respondents associate countries with definite features of human character.

In one of the studies conducted in mid 1999, the respondents were offered a rather long list of features of character (12 positions) for ten countries. The participants were not allowed to give more than three answers for each country on the list. Three integrated characteristics were picked out to characterise the countries: the first one included all features that describe a country’s might. In our opinion, this integrated

characteristic consists of such features as: "wealth", "power" and "self-confidence". The second characteristic describes the attitude towards life and consists of: "thoroughness", "self-confidence", "rationalism" and "industry". The third characteristic consisted of a negative feature such as: "unpredictability", "militancy" and "laziness."

According to the characteristic of "well-being", the public first of all singled out such countries as the USA and Switzerland. As for the power of a country (the characteristic is "might") the absolute leader was the USA (72 percent of the respondents). To compare: Russia had the highest index among the rest of the countries – 28 percent, Germany – 23 percent, Great Britain – 22 percent.

According to the respondents, the English were the most confident nation (31 percent) as well as the Americans (29 percent). As for rationality, public opinion gave first place to Japan (35 percent) – the country that has achieved great success in electronics and high-tech. The most industrious nation was Ukraine (59 percent of the respondents), and this is actually the only criterion where Ukraine took first place.

As a result of the military conflict in Yugoslavia, the respondents considered Yugoslavia and Russia the most unpredictable and unstable countries (50 and 49 percent correspondingly). To compare: Ukraine had the highest index among other countries (30 percent). However, in this case, the unpredictability refers to the sphere of economy and is connected with financial problems that the citizens face in the course of so-called "economic reforms" of the country. This index includes a kind of "protest potential" that formed in Ukraine in regard to the poor economic conditions of the population. The same conclusion can be made about Russia. We should not forget statements made by certain political leaders about active help to Yugoslavia during the military conflict in this country, and the nuclear potential of Russia. All these factors together resulted in a vision of Russia as an unstable and unpredictable state. According to the respondents, the most militant countries were Yugoslavia and the USA (50 and 40 percent), which are associated with two opposite sides of the conflict in Kosovo. Among the other countries, Russia was named the most militant (16 percent). At the same time, according to the respondents, Bulgaria and Ukraine were the most peaceful countries (59 and 54 percent).

The population's foreign policy orientations are significant factors in determining the political activity of leading Ukrainian politicians. It was obvious during the last presidential elections in Ukraine that the foreign policy orientations of the candidates had a rather strong influence on the electoral orientations of the population. This factor influenced the selection of a candidate more than other factors such as

the support for a candidate by entrepreneurs, famous politicians, well-known citizens and the activities of the candidate's election campaign.

During the presidential elections in 1999, a candidate's adherence to a balanced development of both Ukrainian-Russian relations and relations of Ukraine with the West had the most positive influence on the respondents' decision to vote for this candidate. The factor of pro-Russian influence was rather weighty. More than one third of the respondents were in favour of the revival of the USSR. The candidate who supported the idea of a union between Ukraine and NATO had the least number of adherents. In the table given below, the respondents who could not define their point of view were not taken into account.

**Table 3. The influence of a candidate's Foreign Policy Orientation on the Selection made by Respondents during the Elections in 1999**  
(In percentage to the number of those who answered, data of March 1999)

<b>Foreign policy orientations of candidates</b>	<b>Positively</b>	<b>Negatively</b>	<b>Would not influence</b>
Candidate is in favour of a close economic and political union with Russia.	71	15	10
Candidate supports Ukraine joining a renovated Soviet state.	35	37	16
Candidate supports economic integration of Ukraine into Western countries.	58	14	17
Candidate is in favour of both balanced relations with Russia and with Western countries.	79	4	9
Candidate supports own, independent foreign policy, out of blocs status of Ukraine.	41	19	22
Candidate is in favour of Ukraine joining NATO as fast as possible	22	34	18

Experts in the field of political science often connect the election of a new President with the possibility of correcting the country's foreign policy course. That is why the re-elected President of Ukraine, L. Kuchma, taking into consideration the public opinion, must first pursue a well-considered foreign policy, which means maintaining friendly and partner relations both with the CIS and Western coun-



tries. Our polls show that the public expects the re-elected President maintain constructive and peaceful relations with foreign countries taking into account the national interests of Ukraine (34 percent correspondingly). 5 percent of the respondents expect an increase in foreign investments in Ukraine, and only 3 percent of the respondents expect Ukraine's accession to NATO. It should be noted that this question turned out to be difficult for 16 percent of the respondents.

#### PUBLIC EVALUATION OF THE COUNTRY'S SECURITY AFTER SEPTEMBER 11

The national security of a country is linked to the external world in two ways. Firstly, it depends on the processes taking place in the world around us. As a result of the deepening of integrity and interdependency in the present world, security that has been considered an internal basis of state sovereignty has become the subject of international co-operation and negotiations. Secondly, the national security of a state is ensured by both its own efforts and collective measures taken on local, regional and global levels.

Some NATO and OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) documents, which create today's security foundation based on co-operation, integrity and "equality", emphasize security based on partnership. The policy pursued by two of the most representative organisations in the macro-region looks like an attempt to bring international co-operation to the level of partnership considering the latter as a new kind of relation in the field of security. But the potential that they have vested in creating many-sided mechanisms for the implementation of this approach is not explored enough in practice. The events that occurred in the USA on September the 11<sup>th</sup> have made people of all countries thoroughly evaluate the level of security in their countries and look at the problems related to the security and state of the armed forces of their countries.

According to the data of the express-poll conducted by our company on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September in Kiev, more than 96 percent of the respondents were alarmed and worried by this tragedy and more than 38 percent of the respondents were shocked. Most residents of Kiev believed that this terrorist attack had either been an act of punishment or an act to frighten the whole nation and humanity. In the opinion of 20 percent of the residents of Kiev, these terrorist attacks had been a declaration of war against the USA (according to the findings of the Gallup Poll, 86 percent of Americans considered these terrorist attacks "a declaration of war against America"). Almost one half of the respondents believed that these events would, to some

extent, influence their life and 90 percent of those who shared this opinion expected that their life would become worse.

At the beginning of October 2001, another event occurred that caused Ukrainian society to pay closer attention to the problems of military efficiency and alert readiness of the Ukrainian military forces: a Russian civil aircraft that was flying from Tel-Aviv to Moscow was brought down accidentally as a result of a training shooting of Ukrainian air defence forces. According to the polls carried out by our company, in the opinion of almost one half of the respondents, it is not expedient to conduct large-scale military training when the military situation in the world is so tense. Secondly, according to 12 percent of the respondents, the Ukrainian air defence forces were responsible for this tragedy, more than 30 percent of the respondents believed it had been a terrorist attack; in the opinion of 28 percent of the poll's participants, some breakage in the aircraft caused the tragedy; in the opinion of more than 52 percent of the respondents, Ukraine does not have reliable air defence forces and 63 percent of the respondents were sure that Ukraine lacks a strong and effective army. Therefore, Ukrainians are far from being certain that the Ukrainian army can, if necessary, ensure proper national security of the young Ukrainian state. That is why when asked "Do you feel safe on Ukrainian territory nowadays?", suggested in the poll carried out at the end of 2001, 49 percent of the respondents answered that they did, and the same number of the participants did not feel secure in their safety.

Modern concepts of international security consider state security the main goal of a security system of any state. But, in practice, there are several countries in the Euro-Atlantic macro region that are not able to solve complex problems of national security without external help (Ukraine has recently become one of these states for certain economic and political reasons). And the probability of solving these problems on the basis of establishing bilateral relations has never been considered realistic.

The uniqueness of the North-Atlantic Alliance in the sphere of Euro-Atlantic security favours the efficient joining of elements of co-operative and collective security. In particular, this means an absolute transformation in NATO's role and structure. It will become more possible if the process of transformation of the European union is aimed at the practical implementation of principals of collective security. This may speed up the process of transformation of collective security's elements "from inside" which today are the basis of NATO. Under such conditions, there should be a strengthening of partner relations – a carcass of activity, which will take place in the frameworks of the Council of North-Atlantic partnership. At the same time, it may create conditions for deeper dialogue between NATO and

the OSCE taking into account that NATO “partnership” and OSCE “partnership” have the same meaning.

In connection with the September 11 events, a concept of “equal” security in the Euro-Atlantic macro-region should be reanimated. Many-sided mechanisms, which may replace Euro-Atlantic co-operation in the field of security by a partnership, de facto need to be conceptualised in order to have a fuller understanding of the direction of development of modern processes. There is practically no alternative to NATO in terms of solving security problems for today’s Europe taking into consideration the fact that the potentials of the EU are in embryo. That is why contradictions within NATO are not so important for European security in the near future in comparison with contradictions that accompany the formation of the European Union.

#### ATTITUDE TOWARDS EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

General foreign policy orientations of Ukrainians discussed above are a consequence of their (positive or negative) attitude toward some foreign countries and the European union, toward public and military organisations. The population’s vision of foreign policy vectors of our state is based on this attitude.

There are two tendencies in the attitude of Ukrainian citizens towards international European institutions. First of all, this is a well-considered, positive attitude towards the economic co-operation of our country with different European institutions (first of all with the EU) and at the same time, mainly a negative attitude to the possibility of a military co-operation within NATO. EU expansion towards the East raises the question of future relations between Ukraine and this international organisation. In February 2000, the majority of respondents (more than 67 percent) supported the idea of Ukraine’s possible membership in the EU and at the same time, only 9 percent of the respondents were against it. The opponents of Ukraine’s membership in the EU live mainly in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and in the eastern regions of Ukraine where the population traditionally has pro-Russian orientations and distances itself from European integration. More than half of the poll’s participants (57 percent) could see Ukraine as a full member of the European Union in a few years, a little bit more than one quarter of the respondents were in favour of immediate membership in the EU. Only 9 percent of the respondents were in favour of an associate membership of Ukraine in the EU.

According to public opinion, what is the role of Ukraine in the EU? A little less than half of the adherents of Ukraine’s membership

in the EU see our country as a full member of this union in several years. 29 percent of the respondents are even more optimistic: they believe that Ukraine will immediately become a full member of the EU. Certain economic prerequisites and first of all, a proper level of development of national economy are necessary to become a member of the EU. That is why the position of those respondents who see the role of Ukraine, as an associate member of the EU, seems better considered. According to the data of the poll conducted in June 2001, the respondents almost unanimously considered that the European interest in Ukraine is the same as the interest of Ukraine in Europe (81 percent of the respondents). Such an understanding of mutual interests may become a basis for a further positive attitude toward Ukraine's integration into European institutions and strengthening bilateral relations with Western European countries.

According to which criteria must Ukraine approach the European Union? The results obtained in June 2000 show that in mass consciousness, economic conditions of the population are in the foreground.

**Table 4. Hierarchy of Indices of Integration of Ukraine into the EU**  
(in percentage)

<b>Rank of indices</b>	<b>Indices of integration</b>	<b>Level of support</b>
1	Living standard of the population	77
2	Level of industrial growth	50
3	Confidence in tomorrow	30
4	Condition of the law and order system	25
5	Condition of the system of education, science and culture	22
6	Quality of industrial production	19
7	Development of democracy	12

Public opinion has a rather clear idea of the danger of different kinds of dependency that Ukraine may face on its way to the European Union. For example, more than one quarter of the respondents think that Ukraine must avoid financial dependency and 23 percent of the respondents pointed out the danger of economic dependency. Almost an equal number of respondents (12-13 per cent) pointed out the danger of imposing values on Ukraine that are not suitable for its people or the danger of Ukraine being treated like a "younger brother". It is worth noting that almost half of the respondents believe that the leaders of this organisation treat Ukraine, on its way to the EU, more capiously than other countries.

Most respondents believe that the factors that influence Ukraine's integration into the EU are: the strengthening of democratic rights and freedom in Ukrainian society, the stabilisation and reinforcement of Ukraine's economy, finding a solution for numerous social problems, a well considered course in foreign policy and of course, Europe's interest in Ukraine. Taking into consideration that Ukraine's integration into the European community is a difficult and tedious process that requires certain economic reforms and political decisions taken by Ukraine, which in turn could result in significant financial expenditures, the number of supporters of integration into the EU has decreased by 10% in the last 2 years. In 2001, 57 percent of the respondents believed that Ukraine should become a member of the EU, as opposed to 2002, when this decreased to 47 percent. On the contrary, the number of those who oppose Ukraine's integration into the EU has increased from 14 to 23 percent during the same period. 23 percent of the population does not have a clear attitude towards this issue.

The difference between those who support Ukraine's accession to the EU and those who support its accession to NATO is, first of all, that fewer people support the country's accession to NATO than to the EU. In particular, every third participant of the poll supported Ukraine's membership in NATO. At the same time, every fifth respondent was against its accession to NATO and half of the participants of the poll had not defined their position on this issue.

Factors of age and education of the respondents influence their attitude towards accession of Ukraine to NATO as well as their attitude towards accession of Ukraine to the EU. The older the respondents are, the fewer that support Ukraine's accession to NATO and, on the contrary, there are more people who had not defined their attitude. The level of support of its membership in NATO was in direct proportion with the respondents' educational level.

Analysis of data depending on a regional variable showed differences in public opinion of inhabitants from different regions. In particular, participants of the poll from the north western region were most supportive of Ukraine's accession to NATO. There are also more supporters of its accession to this bloc in the western, north eastern, southern regions and in Kiev. In other regions, except Crimea, there is generally an equal number of supporters and opponents of this idea. In Crimea, the ratio of supporters to opponents of its accession to NATO is 1:3.

The result that we obtained is quite logical if we take into consideration that the image of NATO, until recently, has been associated with a military threat in the mass consciousness of soviet people. There is no doubt that the Soviet Union is in the past, but we must not forget that it is rather difficult to change the

consciousness of people, especially the middle-aged, in such a short period of existence of the independent Ukrainian state. It is no surprise then that, particularly among the pensioners, there are more opponents of Ukraine's accession to NATO than supporters of the idea, and more than half still do not have a defined attitude.

There is a correlation between the level of support of military and economic integration of Ukraine into organisations of Western Europe. Adherents of Ukraine's accession to NATO are almost unanimously in favour of its membership in the EU; however, amongst supporters of its membership in the EU, only one half (48 percent) are oriented to Ukraine's membership in NATO. Almost all opponents of Ukraine's accession to NATO (82 percent) also reject the idea of its membership in the EU. Thus, the adherents of military integration of Ukraine are more inclined to accept the idea of a possible economic integration of our country into international institutions of Western Europe than the adherents of the membership in the EU to accept the idea of Ukraine's accession to NATO. We must point out the fact that the adherents of a capitalist way of development of our country provide the weightiest support of both Ukraine's membership in the EU and in NATO.

It must be also mentioned that there is a certain positive change in public opinion towards NATO. According to the data of a nation-wide poll conducted by A. Razumkov's analytic centre in April 2002, the number of Ukrainians who considered NATO an aggressive bloc had decreased from 46 to 33 percent. However, despite an increase in the number of positive evaluations of the Alliance, the share of Ukrainians who think that Ukraine should join NATO has practically not changed in the last 2 years.

The support of respondents to a comprehensive foreign policy co-operation of our country influences their attitude towards Ukraine's accession both to the EU and NATO. The majority of supporters of Ukraine's close co-operation with countries of Central and Eastern Europe are inclined to support Ukraine's accession to the EU and to NATO. The same tendency is observed among the respondents who support close co-operation of Ukraine with the CIS countries. The option of a balanced development of relations both with Western and CIS countries is, to a considerable extent, in line with the political course of the country, but can hardly be implemented due to Russia's position on NATO expansion to the East.

The results of a research conducted by our company show that the respondents who support the idea of a reunion of Ukraine with Russia and Byelorussia into a Slav state express the most negative attitude to the idea of its accession to the EU and NATO. These respondents actually favour the idea reviving the USSR, which means the abolition of the Ukrainian State. The attitude of Ukrainian citizens towards

NATO became considerably topical because of the previously mentioned military operation of NATO in Yugoslavia and because of the assessment made on this operation by different political forces in the country.

In May 1999, more than half of the participants of a poll carried out by our company were against the proposal to break off diplomatic relations with the member countries of NATO (because of the events in Yugoslavia) whereas 13 percent of the respondents held an opposite view. Respondents that live in western regions (more than 70 percent) had the most negative attitude to this suggestion, whereas in Crimea, every fifth respondent was in favour of breaking off diplomatic relations with NATO. The degree of this negative attitude towards breaking off relations increased depending on the respondents' level of education: 20 percent of the respondents that had a primary education (not more than 7 years at school) and 64 percent of the respondents that had a higher education.

In connection with Poland's, Hungary's and the Czech Republic's accession to NATO, Ukraine, having borders with these countries, is faced with an important question: how should it regulate its relations with this bloc? The public believes that our country should first maintain a constructive dialogue with the Alliance taking into consideration our national interests. In September 1999, this opinion was expressed by 61 percent of the respondents, not more than 14 percent of the respondents were in favour of distancing from NATO. The rest of the participants could not define their attitude towards this question. According to a research that we regularly conduct, the level of knowledge that Ukrainians have on the establishment and development of NATO is rather low. It was found out that 23 percent of the respondents could rather precisely name the year when NATO was established (1949) and only every tenth respondent was able to name the number of its member countries (19 countries).

The respondents' level of knowledge of these issues is in direct proportion to the level of their education: the more the respondents are educated, the more they are informed. But less than half the respondents with a higher education knew the year of NATO's establishment (47 percent) and less than a quarter of them gave a precise number of NATO member countries (23 percent).

In order to analyse the reasons for this low popularity of the North-Atlantic bloc, it is necessary to, first of all, mention the negative information burden that most adults in both Ukraine and other former Soviet republics were subjected to. Soviet propaganda formed the opinion, in its people's minds, of the aggressive nature of NATO, whose main goal is to oppose and destroy everything that is developing and progressive. The notion that NATO is ready to destroy us at any convenient moment is deeply rooted in people's

consciousness. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, little has changed. Although there is no propaganda against NATO, mass media does little to provide objective information for Ukrainians on changes within NATO: changes in goals and objectives of the Alliance, NATO programs, its development strategy, etc... Evhen Marchuk – Secretary of the Security Council of Ukraine, has been surprised by the poor awareness of NATO activity demonstrated not only by ordinary officials but also by the heads of local administrations and deputies of the Supreme Council. He believes that this situation is not normal and it hampers a correct understanding of the process of Ukraine's integration into international structures. In our opinion, the present situation may be a result of both an insufficient level of interest that Ukrainians have on such information and inefficient work of the NATO information centre in Ukraine, lack of the bloc's interest in propaganda and popularisation of its image in countries like Ukraine.

But we think that the situation should change drastically after Ukraine's decision to join NATO. First of all, the legal basis of co-operation between Ukraine and NATO will improve. This will happen along with the deepening and formalisation of Ukraine's relations with relevant NATO structures by signing bilateral agreements in certain fields of co-operation, which corresponds with the spirit of a special partnership between Ukraine and NATO. This should all be covered by media – the necessity of Ukraine's integration into NATO should be explained, and the stages which Ukraine should pass on its way to NATO and objectives it faces at each stage should be described.

## MAIN CONCLUSIONS

By analysing the results of surveys conducted in Ukraine over the last few years, we can make the following general conclusions:

1. Public attitude toward Ukrainian foreign policy is generally positive. Most Ukrainians share the official doctrine of a balanced foreign policy course, emphasizing the necessity of more active protection of national interests.

2. The people's perception of certain western states and international institutions is based on historical memory (former USSR states) and some prejudices toward the USA and Germany. The attitude toward these countries is rather irrational, because they are real strategic partners of Ukraine on its way to the European community.

3. A pro-Russian vector dominates in the foreign policy orientation of Ukrainians. However, this tendency is not stable and constant. There are certain factors that have both a positive and negative impact on the attitude of Ukrainian citizens towards Russia.



Only a small number of respondents believe that the policy pursued by the Russian government meets Ukraine's national interests and guarantees its national security.

4. Reform of the Ukrainian armed forces is rather inconsistent and has taken a rather slow pace. It attracts attention only when extraordinary events and tragedies occur (in the year 2000 – a missile hit a dwelling house), the army training in the Black sea (in the year 2001 – a missile hit a civil air craft – more than 70 people died), tragedy during the air-show in Lvov (the year 2002– more than 80 people died). That is why more than half of the population is concerned about the situation in the Ukrainian army. They believe that Ukraine has no need now to maintain such a large and ill-equipped army.

5. As to the public's attitude toward European institutions, there is a clear determination for improved economic cooperation of Ukraine with these organizations.

6. The desire to quickly reach the level of well being of the population of EU member countries is a key reason for our country's integration into the European community, in the opinion of Ukrainians. According to most Ukrainians, our country could join the EU in the near future, but this process may take more time.

7. There are fewer supporters of Ukraine joining NATO than supporters of its joining the EU. Every third participant of the poll supported Ukraine's joining NATO, and at the same time, every fifth respondent was against it, while half the respondents could not make up their minds on this issue.

9. In public opinion, the acknowledgement of mutual interests of the European community and Ukraine in developing beneficial relations could promote a positive attitude of Ukrainians towards pro-European foreign policy.



# **Public Acceptance of Security Issues and Defence Reform in Russia**

**Vladimir Rukavishnikov**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Foreign and security policy issues in general, and military reform issues in particular, are increasingly discussed in the Russian Federation today. The new world order is in the making. There are various views on ways and alternatives of making it more peaceful and predictable (international cooperation in anti-terrorist actions and peace-keeping operations, nuclear disarmament and changes in the format of armed forces, etc). There is one general concern: not to weaken national security.

The official Russian position on threats and challenges is presented in the National Security Concept of Russia, the Military Doctrine and the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, approved in 2000. Historically, major attention on state politics was allocated to the military aspects of national security and relations with nations that may pose an external threat. International terrorism is considered the newly emerged threat, which challenges both global and domestic security along with other inherited external and internal threats. The struggle against terrorism, which was the principal justification for an armed intervention in Chechnya in 1999, has become a key feature of President Putin's policy.

The most important political development of 2001 was, without a doubt, the decision taken by the Russian president in the wake of the September 11 tragic events that occurred in the USA. President Vladimir Putin was in favour of Russia's joining the international counter-terrorism coalition led by the United States. The pro-western turn of Russia's foreign policy was accompanied by reformatting Russian - NATO relations as well as the signing of a new Russian-American agreement on the reduction of strategic arms' potentials in May 2002. The undertaken actions have received ambiguous estimations both from the Russian establishment and the military, and also the people at large.

This chapter treats several interrelated issues pertaining to the perceptions and misperceptions of threats, as well as policy implications: how people perceive key external and internal threats, NATO, the USA and the EU and Putin's turn to closer cooperation with the West in security affairs; debates on military reform and media coverage of NATO's policy in 2000-2002. This chapter reports on how recent political decisions and the new geopolitical situation emerged in the post-Cold War world, which has affected people's basic attitudes towards security affairs and even revived old phobias. National media plays an important role in framing attitudes toward defence and foreign policy. In this chapter, we refer to the study of media coverage of military reform and NATO in 2000-2002 carried out by the author.

## THREATS TO SECURITY

Security is about war and peace, threats to the integrity of the state and stability of the region, interests of individual, society, state and the international system, etc. The notion and content of security as a complex phenomenon presumes its multidimensional and multifacet nature. The national security policy is oriented on eliminating threats or diminishing them to a rational level of various risks threatening the existence and stability of the state, regime, and society.

Russia's security is an integral phenomenon, far more complex than in other cases. There are two basic reasons for this. The first is that many of the most dangerous conflict zones directly adjoin the boundaries of Russia or are located in adjacent areas. This list includes both the recently 'frozen conflicts' in Russia's near abroad and the Balkans, as well as the burning conflicts in South Asia (the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan) and the Middle East. Post-Soviet Russia is on a quest for a greater role in Europe and Asia and the new world order as a whole. Russia has replaced the Soviet Union in major international institutions, but it is not a superpower as was its predecessor. Yet, even if it is still a great nuclear power, its military might is significantly lower than that of the USSR. The second reason is Russia's internal problems that have emerged during its post-communist transition, including the insurgence in Chechnya that has challenged the country's territorial integrity. Therefore, Russia is committed to a broader approach to national security, which recognizes the importance of and interplay between political, economic, social, informational, demographic and environmental aspects in addition to the traditional defence dimension.

The official position on various threats and challenges is presented in certain documents such as the National Security Concept of

Russia,<sup>223</sup> the Military Doctrine<sup>224</sup> and the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation,<sup>225</sup> to name a few. Due to the diversification of the content of security, external and internal threats to security in various fields are defined in these documents. Foreign policy and national security concepts along with the military doctrine describe the antiterrorist struggle as the most important task facing today's Russia. The Russian leadership sees the term "international terrorism" as synonymous to Islamic extremism. They perceive it as an 'Islamic terrorist international' threat to the southern regions of the former Soviet Union, as well as the stability of the Russian Federation and the new world order. It resembles the current US attitude toward Bin Laden's al-Qaeda network although the Russian position on this issue has been formulated more than two years before the events on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2001.

There is no need to comment on the aforementioned official Russian documents in this chapter, and we have to just note that the overwhelming majority of Russians have never heard about or read them, yet they are available to the general public and discussed in the press. In this regard, Russians do not differ from other nations, as far as we know.

The perception of threats by individuals, various social groups, elites and the public at large is largely formed by media reports, the

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<sup>223</sup> The National Security Concept of the Russian Federation was approved by the National Security Council on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 1999; the full text of this document was published in Russian by the *Nezavisimoe Voennoe Obosrenie (Independent Military Review)* the weekly application to the daily newspaper *Nezavisimaya Gazeta (the Independent Gazette)*, #15 (237), 27 April 2001 (*Internet version*).

<sup>224</sup> The Russian Federation Military Doctrine was approved by the presidential decree of the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 2000. There are various views on Russia's new military doctrine, which we cannot be described here in detail. See, for instance: Alexei G. Arbatov. *The Transformation of Russian Military Doctrine: lessons from Kosovo and Chechnya*. The Marshall Center Papers, No.2, July 20, 2000. In this pamphlet, the shortened version of the military doctrine is presented as the appendix.

<sup>225</sup> President Vladimir Putin approved the new foreign policy concept on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June 2000. The new foreign policy concept replaces the previous concept of 1993, which was thought to no longer to correspond to the realities of the contemporary international system. Perhaps the most significant feature of the concept is the emphasis it places on Russia's limited foreign policy capabilities. It notes "the limited resource support for the foreign policy of the Russian Federation, making it difficult to uphold its foreign economic interests and narrowing down the framework of its information and cultural influence abroad." Elsewhere, the concept argues that a "successful foreign policy ... must be based on maintaining a reasonable balance between its objectives and possibilities for attaining these objectives. Concentration of diplomatic, military, economic, financial and other means on resolving foreign political tasks must be commensurate with their real significance for Russia's national interests". The concept can be found on the web-site: <http://www.mid.ru/vpcons.htm>

president's and politicians' statements along with personal knowledge, feelings and experiences, fears of newly emerged unknown dangers and old deep-rooted phobias and stereotypes. Perceived foreign threats include military build-up, changing the balance near the borders of Russia and its allies, as well as US withdrawal from the 1972 ABM Treaty and the expansion of the North Atlantic Alliance to the detriment of the Russian military security, international terrorism and anti-Russian policies of certain governments, providing financial and moral support to separatists acting in Chechnya, illegal immigration from neighbouring states, etc.

Russian society is carefully watching how the country is secured, and polls show how the perception of threats is changing through time. The failure of western states to take Russia's objections into account, particularly regarding NATO expansion and its operation against Yugoslavia during the days of the Kosovo crisis, has triggered the growth of anxiety concerning *external* enemies in both the Russian military and the public at large. The number of people who believe that "Russia has external enemies, which may unleash a war against our country" has increased from 44 percent in August 1997 (the year that the NATO-Russia Founding Act was signed) to 73 percent in April 1999, at the moment of the NATO air strikes on Belgrade, and to 61 percent in November 2001, when the American aviation dropped bombs on Afghanistan as part of an anti-terrorist campaign launched after the September 11 tragedy in the USA.<sup>226</sup> It should be stressed that despite the aforementioned concerns, Russians believe that external aggression against Russia is unlikely at the present time. This state of mind has not changed since the end of 80's. The perception of threats and enemies by the political elite and ordinary people may not and actually do not coincide with the publicly declared position of authorities for many reasons. "There are no external enemies of Russia today", President Vladimir Putin said recently. At the same time, he asked the parliament to increase defence expenses and to support military reform (we will touch on this issue in the next section). There is nothing new in Putin's statement, because Yeltsin's previous national security doctrine published in December 1997 clearly stated that foreign countries did not pose a threat to Russia's security. Moreover, both the public and the past and present administrations admit that the major threats to Russia are domestic - crime, corruption, poverty, and other social malaises are permanent internal dangers.

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<sup>226</sup> The number of those who gave a negative answer is also important: 35 % in 1997, 15% in 1999 and 27% in 2001. In 1997, 21% hesitated to answer against 12% in 1999 and 2001. Data of the Russian Public Opinion Foundation (FOM) nationwide polls.

Safeguarding the integrity of the territory and strengthening the statehood of the Russian Federation are top priorities of President Putin in comparison to other foreign policy objectives. There is a national consensus that the ongoing war against separatist fighters in Chechnya represents a *key internal* threat to Russian state security. This war has also disclosed the threat of religious extremism of Islamic fundamentalists to security and stability in the Russian Federation as a multi-national and multi-confessional country. It has also uncovered various links between separatists and international terrorism because rebels receive financial support from abroad and from foreign mercenaries who are taking part in the internal conflict.

In the spring of 2002, President Putin stated that the "military phase of the counter-terrorist operation in Chechnya may be considered closed." But the military victory in Chechnya has already been claimed many times before, since the last capture of Grozny, the capital of the region, in 2000. In fact, the guerrilla war is continuing, and the ultimate victory of the federals is still far away.<sup>227</sup> The bulk of society favours the military operation against the remaining rebels,<sup>228</sup> although the tiny share of liberals argue that Russia will never take its due place in the international community nor will it have a truly "attractive business climate" while the war in Chechnya continues.

## TRUST IN THE ARMED FORCES

The war in Chechnya has severely damaged the popular confidence in the armed forces and other security institutions (table 1). During the first Chechen war (1994–1996), the proportion of people who identified themselves as 'fully confident' in the army decreased by 10 percent: from about 37 percent in the fall of 1994 to 27 percent in the summer of 1996, when federal troops suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of outnumbered, lightly armed guerrillas. The army had retaken most of the rebel region, but had not stamped out resistance, and finally it was forced to withdraw by President Yeltsin's political decision and under public pressure.

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<sup>227</sup> According to newly revealed data of the Russian Public Opinion Foundation (FOM) nation-wide poll in June 2002, over a half of the respondent (59%) have 'no hopes concerning the normalization of the situation in Chechnya in the nearest future', against 27 percent with optimistic views on this point (Web-edition "Gazeta.Ru", 13.06.2002).

<sup>228</sup> In March 2002, 40% of respondents supported the continuation of the military action of federal troops against rebels till the complete victory; and only 17% of respondents acknowledge the independence of this republic and the withdrawal of the Russian army from its territory (data of ROMIR polling agency, distributed by Interfax news agency, "Gazeta Ru", 14.03.2002).

The second Chechen war started in the fall of 1999. It was named the 'counter-terrorist operation'. After the initial success of the federal troops, the level of popular trust in the army increased to 48 percent in the spring of 2000, but then decreased again to 33 percent in the fall of 2001. This fluctuation occurred during the first years of Putin's term. The success in the first part of the second Chechen war helped Mr. Putin win the race for presidency. In the second phase of the 'counter-terrorist operation' in Chechnya, Russian units from the MoD and all of the country's force ministries and agencies (Federal Security Service, Interior Ministry, border guards and so on) failed to bring peace and to eradicate the separatist guerrillas in a short time.

Here we have to say a few words about the impact of mass media on popular attitudes toward the armed forces in connection with these wars. During the first Chechen war, media coverage of military action Moscow frequently contradicted official information, the failures and mistakes of the military commanders were exposed and the losses in the 'information war' played a major role in shifting the public opinion against continuing the campaign. Russian authorities learned the lesson of their failure in the 'information war' very well, and from the beginning of the second campaign, the flow of information from Chechnya has been rigorously controlled by the military and Kremlin's officials. Despite this fact, in 2001-2002, in the second part of the counter-terrorist operation, Russian journalists have challenged the official casualty figures published by the federal leadership and have even started to question the brutality and corruption of the military engaged in the operation. The revelation that the Russian position in Chechnya is far less favourable than had previously been reported is reflected in the mentioned poll data.

## VIEWS ON MILITARY REFORM

The aim of military reform is to adjust the Russian armed forces to a change of geopolitical conditions and ultimately to create a modern professional army. Talks about military reforms began in 1992-93, when the first post-Soviet Russian government had radically cut defence expenses and the army was involved in a confrontation between the president and the parliament.<sup>229</sup> The first unsuccessful campaign in Chechnya had revealed the actual weakness of the ground forces and emphasized the necessity of an overall military reform. The program

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<sup>229</sup> The review of the situation in the Russian army in the early 1990's can be found in the essay of Konstantin, E. Sorokin. "Russia and the Former Soviet Union". In : Danopoulos C.D., Watson C. (eds.) *The Political Role of the Military: An International Handbook*, Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 1996, pp.391-403.



of military reforming was announced in the mid 1990's. But little has been done to the present, and the military has steadily deteriorated.<sup>230</sup> It can no longer afford to buy new weaponry, or train recruits and fuel planes so in order for pilots to maintain their skills at appropriate levels. The basic reason is poor funding.

Officials have talked about downsizing the military for 10 years, vowing to streamline the large conscript force inherited from the Soviet Union. One may recall that in reaction to public demands, President Yeltsin, in the spring of 1996, brought a decree with the intention of abolishing conscription by the spring of 2000. This famous decree was a part of his re-election campaign, and later this unrealistic plan was dismissed.

During the short pre-election campaign in the winter/spring of 2000, Mr. Putin also promised the electorate he would produce a comprehensive military reform. The military believed in Putin's priority commitment to its reform and modernization, and over 90 percent of the military voted for him. In the first years of his term in office, state attention to national security was increased: defence expenses slowly increased; the Strategic Aviation and the Navy, and so on performed the first large-scale exercises. Nonetheless, the armed forces spent 70 percent of its resources on maintaining current levels, leaving little cash for training and new weapons.

In March 2001, President Putin replaced the leadership in virtually all of the national security and defence agencies, including the Minister of Defence and his two deputies, the Minister of Interior and the Head and Deputy of the Security Council. The reshuffle in the MoD was in part inspired by disagreements over procurement priorities between the outgoing Defence Minister Sergeyev, who favoured upgrading nuclear forces, and the Chief of General Staff Kvashnin, who favoured modernizing conventional forces.

Later, in the spring of 2002, President Putin approved the new program of military reform (which, in fact, is a re-worked version of the previous one). The aim of this reform was to improve the readiness and operational efficiency of the armed forces by optimising their structure, composition and numerical strength, enhancing the standard of equipment, training and logistics, as well as improving the well being of military personnel. According to this program, the Russian armed forces would gradually be transformed into a professional army on a voluntary basis that meant the abolishment of conscription by the year 2010. Russia planned to cut its military establishment by about

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<sup>230</sup> Rukavishnikov V. "The military and society in post-communist Russia at the threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> century". In: .Kuhlmann, J. Callaghan (eds.) *Military and Society in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Europe. A comparative analysis*. LIT Verlag, Munster, Hamburg, London, 2000, p. 161-182.

600,000 people in hope of building a more mobile and effective force over the next few years.<sup>231</sup>

Concerning the basic idea of reforming the entire structure of the armed forces, experts noted a lack of actual innovation in this part of the program compared to the previous plan of military reform issued during Yeltsin's term in office.<sup>232</sup> They emphasized that restructuring actions in practice have been concentrated on a reshuffle at the highest level of the military establishment that reflected the hidden rivalry between the leadership of MoD and the General Staff more than the real concern about the efficiency of management and the abolishment of parallel and redundant command echelons.

Of course, reform of the Russian armed forces will be carried out taking into account the present geopolitical situation in which the country finds itself, as well as any changes in its economic standing that we can foresee. However, there are fears that these arrangements may not be fully implemented for economic reasons, the resistance of some of the generals and politicians and the lack of political will. Unfavourable judgements dominate in publications on military reform issues regardless of the ideological inclinations of the editors.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> The cuts will come only in support services and administrators, not in units meant to fight. We have to note that today in addition to the Ministry of Defence, 11 other ministries and services - including the Interior Ministry, Border Guards, the intelligence services and railroad troops - have more than 900,000 military personnel. There are also 966,000 civilians working for the military and related agencies. The program wants to cut 365,000 of the 1.2 million troops under Ministry of Defence command by 2005, about 105,000 servicemen from other agencies and 130,000 civilians working for the armed forces, according to the Interfax and ITAR-TASS news agencies. Of the 600,000 people to be trimmed, 240,000 will be officers, including 380 generals, media reports said. Russian Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov reported that during 2001 the number of Armed Forces personnel was reduced by 91,000 military servicemen. In addition, Ivanov announced, 14.5 thousand civilian staffers were discharged from the Armed Forces and from the Navy.

<sup>232</sup> In May 1997 the practical implementation of military reform started. Initially, the reform was seen as a two-stage effort, aimed at creating a rational and effective military structure capable of guaranteeing the defence and security of the nation, within the limits imposed by present social and economic conditions and the country's means. As planned in the first stage (1997 - 2000) the personnel strength of the armed forces should be reduced to 1,200,000 by 1 January 1999, but, in fact, by January 1, 2002 the number of staff in Russia's Armed Forces amounted to 1 million 274 thousand military servicemen. In the course of the second stage of reform (2001-2005), a transition to a three-element armed forces structure, according to the area of application (land, air and space, sea) should be produced. And the newly approved version of reform's program keep this idea unchanged. In addition to Land Forces, Air Force, and Navy, is supposed to have also Airborne, Space and Strategic Rocket Forces. See also on this issue: *Strategic Survey 2000/2001*, May 2001, p.118 -120.

<sup>233</sup> Debates on military reform in media have been intensified in the fall of 2000 when the draft of the new program of military reform was completed and the western military contingents were deployed in the Central Asian states in the framework of

Even though authors have argued this problem from different perspectives, the general conclusion is as follows: unless urgent measures are taken, the Russian army, currently wallowing in a mire of poverty, theft and corruption, will soon lose its combat efficiency.

An important point of the military reform program is an increase in the officers' incomes, and a first step in this direction will be made in the near future. Nobody opposes this governmental intention, even though its populist nature is also obvious, keeping in mind the upcoming national elections. There are doubts concerning the efficiency of this because of the minimal increase in officers' salaries and its real impact on the well being of military families and prestige of the military officer profession.

Most of our military chiefs believe that true "military reform" can begin only when defence spending is quadrupled. But it is not clear today when the state will be able to afford such expenses. While this dream has not yet become a reality, Russian generals have desperately tried to preserve what remains of the former Soviet military might. The Chief of General Staff, General Anatoly Kvashnin, speaking before the Security Council session dedicated to the prospects of army development for the period of 2003-2010, said, "before creating an efficient professional army, the state leadership should solve the problem of the physical survival of army officers and guarantee that the servicemen's income will not be below the subsistence level but above the average national level. This task should be top-priority for the next three to five years. If we fail to make the money allowance more than twice as high, we will soon have no officers. Those in the service since Soviet times will leave, and there will be nobody new to replace them"<sup>234</sup>

The public opinion favours the idea of all-volunteer forces. The Defence Ministry will be running "experiments at selected military units" (including the airborne division) to evaluate the plausibility of building an army from volunteers. Critics of this idea say that generals only want these "experiments" in order to buy time and will surely conduct them in such a way that the result is negative. The MOD leadership stands in favour of continuing conscription out of economic reasons despite the fact that the quality of the draftees is deteriorating

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the US -led international anti-terrorist operation against the al-Qaeda network and the Taliban movement in Afghanistan. According to the results of content-analysis, in the period from September 1, 2001 to April 31, 2002, 85% of all materials devoted to the military reform issues in the center-right liberal newspaper "*Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (*The Independent Gazette*)" contained severe criticism and unfavourable opinions as well as 94% of articles on this topic published in "*Zavtra*", the leftist-nationalist weekly newspaper .

<sup>234</sup> "Corrupt army incapable of defending Fatherland", the web-edition 'Gaseta. Ru, 31 May 2002.

in terms of their health conditions, educational levels and criminal records and the declining number of conscripts due to demographic and other causes.

## THE RUSSIAN PERCEPTION OF NATO

In the late 1980's, NATO lost its potential adversary, the Soviet Union and its allies. The Warsaw Pact was dismissed. It brought expectations that the western nations' alliance would soon be disbanded. But those expectations did not materialize. In October 1991, the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister visited the NATO Headquarters for discussions on joining the Alliance. In December 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed, but its successor, the Russian Federation, continued the negotiation process from as early on as 1992. However, the Alliance did not admit post-Soviet Russia as a new member during the eight years of Yeltsin's term in office.

In May 1997, the NATO-Russia Founding Act was signed. This agreement created an illusion of the improvement of relations between former adversaries. In 1999, after the war in Kosovo, it became clear to the Russians and the entire world that the Russia-NATO Founding Act had been discredited.

The war for the province of Kosovo revived old deep-rooted fears and phobias. Ever since that war, many Russians became sure that a NATO military intervention on the internal affairs of other countries, including Russia, was possible even without the UN Security Council sanction.

Although NATO officials counter that the alliance has always been purely defensive and is not aimed at anybody, many Russians do not buy such an explanation. Many Russians have said in interviews: "If NATO is a collective defence organization, then show us, please, for God' sake, who, which nation, may attack NATO states in the current situation?" And have added: "We all know very well that the Baltic state leaders are striving to join the Alliance talking about the protection against a 'possible Russian aggression' under the NATO nuclear umbrella. If Russia is not the enemy, then why does NATO go eastward? Perhaps, leaders in the West think that Russia will not be weak forever and have a profound mistrust of the Russians".

Today, the majority of Russians perceive NATO as the *aggressive, not defensive* military alliance. In May 2002, more than half of Russians (54 percent) considered NATO as the aggressive bloc and only one quarter (24 percent) - as the defensive union (the rest declined to answer).<sup>235</sup> This means that most people are simply misin-

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<sup>235</sup> This is the outcome of the Russian Public Opinion Foundation (FOM) May 2002 survey. Compared with the results of the poll carried out in February 1997, the

formed about the current process of the transformation of NATO from a pure military alliance to mainly a political-military body. NATO was the main military threat for the Soviet Union, and NATO is the military threat to Russia, half of Russians today have no doubts about this. This image of the Alliance as the potential aggressor is deeply implanted in the brains of generations of Russians, and, as the latest surveys show, many middle-aged and older people cannot get rid of it even to this day. 52 percent of those interviewed in the aforementioned May 2002 poll agreed with this opinion as opposed to less than one third (31 percent) with the opposite opinion. 17 percent declined to answer. In August 2000, approximately the same number of Russians (54 percent) felt, "Russia has grounds to be afraid of the NATO countries" (the opposite view shared only 32 %).<sup>236</sup> And, as was clearly and transparently shown in the "humanitarian war" against Yugoslavia, these old Soviet fears about NATO are not entirely unfounded.<sup>237</sup>

It is easy to see that the opinion of half the Russians on the nature of the Alliance has not changed even in the first two years of Putin's term. This picture is a striking contrast to the state of minds registered in the early 1990s, when the majority of Russians did not speak about NATO in terms of a real military threat to their country.<sup>238</sup> One may assume, the traditional Cold-war pattern of opinion is coming back, but, in our view, it is a reverberation of the NATO war in Kosovo. When asked about the national interest of the Russian Federation and that of NATO, only 25 percent said that these interests coincided more than they diverged, while the relative majority of 48 percent held the opposite point of view, stressing the divergence of interests (27 percent polled hesitated to answer).

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results of the May 2002 survey showed a remarkable shift toward the more suspicious and unfavourable attitude toward NATO present in the last five years, including the year 1999 and first two years of Putin's reign. In February 1997, 38 percent of respondents said that NATO is the aggressive bloc, while 24 percent considered the Alliance a defensive organization, and 38 percent could identify its nature. The number of those who agree with the first definition has increased 18 percent, and the number of those who consider NATO as the defence union has not changed in five years

<sup>236</sup> The results of the Russian Center for Public Opinion Research (VCIOM) survey conducted in August 2001 published in: *Monitoring Objestvennogo Mnenia (The Russian Public Opinion Monitor)*, Vol.1, January-February 2001, p. 15 – 30: quoted p. 26.

<sup>237</sup> From this point of view, the USSR's first request to join NATO in 1949 may have not been entirely cynical. Moreover, the Soviet Union was the country then to fear a resurgence of German militarism and it had evidence of hostility from the Americans and its allies toward the USSR.

<sup>238</sup> See more in: Ester P., Halman L., and Rukavishnikov V. *From Cold War to Cold Peace? A Comparative Empirical Study of Russian and Western Political Cultures*. Tilburg: Tilburg University Press, 1997, pp.183- 184.

After the September 11 tragedy, President Putin focused on re-formatting NATO-Russian links weakened by the Kosovo crisis. In May 2002, the new Council for deepening collaboration between the Russian federation and the 19 NATO member-states was established in Rome. Its ‘father-founders’ insisted that, in spite of the problems that existed, the NATO-Russia Council provided extensive opportunities for creating an atmosphere of trust. This could facilitate settling existing differences in our relations as well as establishing efficient and productive machinery for cooperation between the military establishments of Russia and NATO member states as well<sup>239</sup>. The near future will show whether or not the publicly declared aim of this Council, to serve as the main instrument of political-military cooperation between the West and Russia, will remain a bare declaration, as thought by many experts in Russia.

Despite the unfavourable image of the Alliance, the majority of Russians support the escalating collaboration with NATO<sup>240</sup>. In our view, this is purely a pragmatic position, based on a desire to reduce or weaken the threat. It should be also noted that the number of respondents declaring themselves supporters of the Russia-NATO collaboration has significantly increased by 2002: from 45 percent in July 1999 to 62 percent in May 2002 (58 percent in September 2001.<sup>241</sup>)

## THE RUSSIAN MEDIA ON NATO

It is fair enough to say that the activity of the North Atlantic Alliance is monitored in Russia with great attention. This is Soviet heritage. The way NATO is portrayed in the Russian media to a great extent determines popular attitudes toward this organisation. The main

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<sup>239</sup> This is also an important task for the European nations which was quite clear for experts as far as in the mid-1990s: “In particular, the tangled and sensitive question of NATO expansion involves thinking about how to integrate the Russians in ways, which they find attractive, which others find acceptable, and where they can perform a useful role”, wrote Dr. Gwyn Prins from Emmanuel College, Cambridge, in 1997 (Gwyn Prins from. Security challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. NATO review Web-edition, No.1 –Jan. 19997, Vol. 45, pp. 27-30).

<sup>240</sup> The minority of 20 percent kept the negative view on the prospects of Russia-NATO cooperation, and the rest (17 percent) had no opinion on this issue. The results of the Russian Public Opinion Foundation (FOM) nationwide poll carried out in May 2002 quoted from the Internet edition

“Gazeta.ru (<http://www.gazeta.ru/2002/05/27/rossiapopala.shtml>).

<sup>241</sup> The proportion of opponents to strengthening of cooperation between Russia and NATO declined from 32 percent in July 1999 to 18 percent in September 2001 and 20 percent in May 2002 (data of the Russian Public Opinion Foundation (FOM) poll carried out on May 4, 2002 ; the report revealed on May 17, 2002 on:

<http://www.fom.ru/survey/dominant/290/721/2359.html>).

national television channels, and the electronic media at large are currently under strict control of the authorities. While news reports on television usually present bold information about events without obviously expressed estimations and emotions, broader comments on NATO policy with a few exceptions resemble views and judgments expressed by representatives of state institutions, responsible for foreign and defence policy of the Russian Federation. While communist, leftist and national-patriotic editions with traditional anti-western views keep a traditional look on NATO, a mixture of suspicion and hostility, the liberal and centre-right newspapers and magazines look to the Alliance without open unfriendliness, although often criticize its policy.

According to our enquiries, after Kosovo, there was no large diversity of opinions concerning NATO in mass media: NATO was portrayed basically as the European policeman, whose behaviour in the conflict areas was far from impartiality. Yet one may question the media ability to understand and cover peacekeeping, specifically, in view of the dubious outcomes of the NATO-led missions in the former Yugoslavia and events in Macedonia.<sup>242</sup>

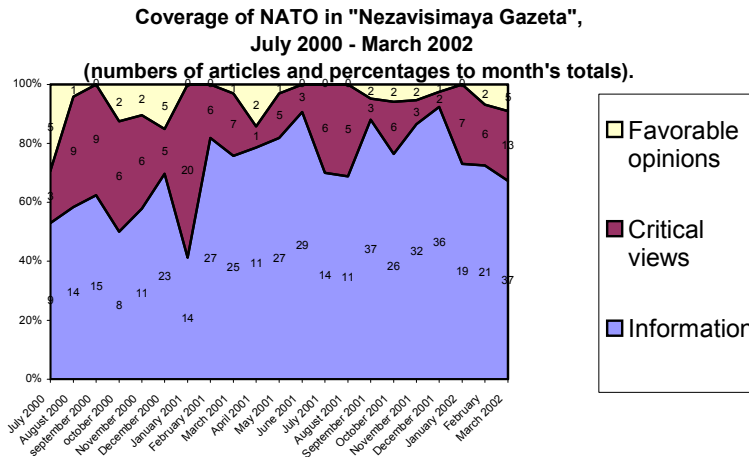
After September 2001, some analysts said that Russia helped the US in the war against terror more than NATO and once again questioned the objectives of the Alliance in the changing global security environment. The press places emphasis on the very fact that in reality, NATO as an organization, is not engaged in the multinational operation in Afghanistan, yet national military contingents from NATO countries are taking part in the action.

Generally speaking, favourable opinions of NATO are rather rare 'guests' on the pages of Russian newspapers and magazines, while information about events related to NATO appear with a greater frequency. The histogram on figure 1 demonstrates numbers and proportions of publications with neutral, favourable and unfavourable opinions of NATO in the popular and influential newspaper *Nezavisimaya Gazeta (the Independent Gazette)* from July 2000 to April 2002 as the example.

Because NATO is perceived as an essential instrument of US policy in Europe, before September 11, the interpretation of NATO's behaviour, especially in the region of South-Eastern Europe, in some cases had reached, in our view, a dimension of an anti-American mania. After the September tragedy, anti-American tones disappeared for a while, and then reappeared in the spring of 2002 but not with the same strength and intensity.

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<sup>242</sup> In the Russian printed media, the NATO action against Yugoslavia was condemned as unjustified aggression, and the recent aggravation of the internal situation in Macedonia has been considered a direct and sad consequence of NATO's myopic policy.



## NATO EXPANSION MAKES RUSSIANS EDGY

In May 1997, Russian President Boris Yeltsin said that NATO enlargement became the cause of the biggest dispute with the US since the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. Since then, Russian officials have continued to criticize the plan of NATO expansion, but their objections have not been accepted. Moreover, in March 1999, the Alliance had admitted three new members: Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary. And soon after that event, during the days of the Kosovo crisis, NATO attacked Yugoslavia ignoring the objections of the Russian Federation.

In the early 1990's, debates on post-Cold war NATO strategy did not worry the Russian public very much. Ordinary people hardly ever commented on the matter, as they were more concerned with far more pragmatic problems, and domestic political battles attracted the attention of the public much more than NATO policy. In December 1995, only one out of a hundred respondents (0.7 per cent) expressed concern over NATO enlargement.<sup>243</sup> Since then, public anxiety over NATO expansion has grown steadily over the years: in 1996 the proportion of respondents who considered themselves concerned increased to 31 percent, in 1997 – to 51 percent. In May 1999, during the NATO bombardment of Yugoslavia, when asked whether or not

<sup>243</sup> The survey conducted by the Russian Center for Public Opinion (VCIOM) (Segodnya daily newspaper, 10 September 1996). Cited from Parhalina T. "On myths and illusions: Russian perceptions of NATO enlargement". NATO review, No.3, May –June 1997, Vol. 45, p. 11 –15. Web-edition:

<http://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/9703-3.html>.



the enlargement of NATO increased the military threat to Russia, 64 percent of those interviewed answered positively.<sup>244</sup> After the NATO victory in July 1999, 66 percent of the respondents said that NATO enlargement was a threat for Russia.<sup>245</sup> One out of two respondents expressed their anxiety about the intention of the Baltic countries to join NATO in the next phase of enlargement.<sup>246</sup> In 2002, the picture remains the same: nearly half (48 percent) of Russians disapprove of that idea.<sup>247</sup> We must also say, most Russians think that enlarging NATO is linked with American national interests. Via NATO, the USA wants to maintain its military presence in Europe and simultaneously to counter any expansion of the Russian role in the continent.<sup>248</sup> Therefore, admission of former Soviet allies and ex-Soviet republics to the alliance is interpreted in Russia as not so much the accession of these states to NATO rather the formalization of their security ties to the USA.

In February 1999, at a Washington conference on NATO enlargement, Prof. Z. Brzezinski emphasized that the very idea of expanding the alliance depends on the aim of NATO. He said: "If NATO expansion was particularly driven by the desire to enhance Europe's geopolitical security against Russia, then no further expansion is needed because NATO has gained geo-strategic depth. It has enhanced its security by adding a chain of countries that further increases the scope of West Europe's security. But if Europe's desire to be a zone of peace and democracy was a driving element of NATO expansion, thereby creating a wider Euro-Atlantic system, then it follows that further expansion is mandatory. Historically mandatory, geopolitically desirable".<sup>249</sup>

<sup>244</sup> 17 percent gave a negative answer, and 20 percent hesitated to respond (the report of the Russian Public Opinion Foundation (FOM) nationwide poll revealed on 19 May 1999).

<sup>245</sup> 14 per cent did not consider this process as dangerous for Russia and 21 per cent hesitated to answer (the results of the Russian Public Opinion Foundation (FOM) nationwide poll revealed on 14 July 1999).

<sup>246</sup> 21 percent were indifferent to this issue, 18 percent expressed no concern, and 9 – declined to answer (the results of the Russian Public Opinion Foundation (FOM) nationwide poll revealed on 14 July 1999, 21).

<sup>247</sup> 25 percent had indifferent opinion, 9 percent approved of the plan (the results of the Russian Center for Public Opinion Research (VCIOM) survey carried out in February 2002; quoted from *Monitoring Obshchestvennogo Mnenia (The Russian Public Opinion Monitor)*, Vol. 2 (58), March -February 2002, p. 34).

<sup>248</sup> "Washington should be in a position to counter any expansion of Russian influence in the region", - such a view was expressed by Prof. Samuel Huntington (Huntington, S.H. "The Lonely Superpower". *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 78, March/April 1999, p. 47).

<sup>249</sup> Quoted from: Frank T. Csongos. "NATO: Expansion –How Far, How Fast?" <http://www.rferl.org/nca/features/1999/02/F.RU.990212141514.html>.

Soon after the convention, the enlarged alliance dropped bombs and occupied the province of Kosovo to “punish President Slobodan Milosevic” for not giving up as called for in the Rambouillet accords, to “protect the Albanians”, to “prevent spill over of the conflict into the entire Balkan region”, and, finally, to “protect democracy”. It was a precedent. At that time, some people in our country asked, if the United States and its allies intervened in the internal affairs of Yugoslavia “to protect democracy”, - even to the point of bombing Serbia, - why shouldn’t they do the same in Latvia or Estonia, where the civil rights of the Russian minority is still limited? Why are these counties listed for membership in the alliance?

The US administration and NATO officials often say that NATO expansion into Central and Eastern Europe is necessary to encourage the region’s new democracies to stay on the path to free markets and integration into Western Europe. This is only part of the truth, because as Prof. Dan Reiter from Emory University demonstrated, “NATO membership has not and will not advance democratisation in Europe. The empirical record during the Cold war is clear: inclusion in NATO did not promote democracy among its members. Further, enlargement did not contribute much to democratisation in the three East European states admitted in 1999, and the promise of NATO membership is unlikely to speed up democracy within any of the nine countries currently waiting for the decision on their request for membership”.<sup>250</sup>

From the Russian point of view, the interest of the higher political leadership of Central and Eastern European countries to join NATO has been to a large extent initiated and is still stimulated by the Western proponents of enlargement.<sup>251</sup> These countries seek to join NATO due to a desire to speed up integration into the Western community, to “return to Europe”, if not through the main door, the EU, then at least through the “side door”, which is NATO. Russians admit that the ruling elite of virtually all these states continues to fear the possibility that Russia will once again seek to dominate the region; thus, they see NATO membership as a guarantee against that possibility. This supported by a feeling of irrational Russo-phobia.

Speaking in Poland on June 15, 2001, President Bush “called for an Atlantic Alliance that would stretch all the way to Russia’s border, delving more emphatically and aggressively than any of his predecessors into a matter guaranteed to make Moscow nervous”.<sup>252</sup> Referring

<sup>250</sup> Reiter D. “Why NATO Enlargement Does Not Spread Democracy?” *International Security*, Vol. 25, No.4 (Spring 2001), pp. 41-67; cited from p. 42.

<sup>251</sup> This is a position of the Council on Foreign and Defence Policy, the Russian influential non-governmental think tank, see on web-site: <http://www.svop.ru/doklad/en1.htm>.

<sup>252</sup> Frank Bruni. “President urges Expansion of NATO to Russia’s Border”. The New York Times, June 16, 2001

to the steady expansion of the alliance, which will be discussed in detail at the NATO Summit in Prague in the fall of 2002, Mr. Bush said, "The question of 'when' may still be up for debate within NATO, but the question of 'whether' should not". He added, "As we plan to enlarge NATO, no nation should be used as a pawn in the agendas of others. We will not trade away the fate of free European peoples. No more Munichs. No more Yaltas".

Those phrases of Mr. Bush refer to historic facts. They disclosed his perception of the new world order. Observers in Russia questioned whether the American president equalized post-Soviet Russia with Nazi Germany, referring to the Munich pact that assigned certain European countries to Germany's sphere of influence. Others said, the Yalta conference created the post second world war order, and therefore Mr. Bush's remark should be interpreted as a sign that, in his view, the new order with US dominance as a lonely superpower is today's reality. "NATO, even as it grows, is no enemy of Russia", said President Bush, - "Russia is a part of Europe, and, therefore, does not need a buffer zone of insecure states separating it from Europe". But Russia, Mr. Bush seemed to say, could become a friendly partner to his world vision or might find itself alone. Thus, the American president had admitted that the further expansion of NATO objectively may lead to a new division of the continent that is, certainly, not in the interest of Russians.

President Vladimir Putin says, Russia respects the will of the Baltic nations if they enter NATO. However, on the eve of the entry of new members into NATO, Russia's military brass remains vehemently opposed to the alliance's enlargement eastward, which it considers a direct threat to the country's security. In the fall of 2002, the new phase of NATO enlargement will become a reality, and if the Baltic republics join the Alliance, then NATO will reach Russia's borders. Some observers in Russia, recalling the previous chain of events, bring up the question, where and when might the next NATO war be? And this question is not just a simple joke, but also an indication of growing concern regarding the Alliance strategy in the Russian establishment. At the same time, Russia does not oppose the enlargement of the European Union. In May 2002, 47 percent of the respondents said that the European Union should be the main partner of the Russian Federation, and only 4 percent thought that the USA should become the chief partner of Russia.<sup>253</sup>

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(<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/06/16/world/16PREX.html>).

<sup>253</sup> 28 percent supported an equal partnership with both the EU and the USA, 21 percent hesitated to answer. Data of the Russian Public Opinion Foundation (FOM) nationwide poll quoted from the Internet edition "Gazeta.ru:

(<http://www.gazeta.ru/2000/05/21/evropadlaros.shtml>).

## CONCLUSION

Certainly, the majority of Russians have never read the new editions of the foreign, defence and security policy doctrines and concepts, but they have a favourable opinion of their president's policy and want to revive Russia's dignity, status and might. The Russian public understands that the only way to eliminate major threats to security is to modernize Russia, to make it a democratic state with a prosperous economy. Russia's economic weakness, which is evidently recognized by the Russian military and the public at large, appears to have compelled the Putin leadership to accept that its foreign policy objectives must be correspondently modest.

It is important to emphasize the impact of history on the perception of external threats and challenges to security. In Russia, historical consciousness is traditionally very strong. As we have shown, the recent Kosovo lesson has shaped a certain view of external threats and foreign enemies shared by many Russians. In fact, the attack on Yugoslavia has taught Russians just what the US and NATO can do and even more importantly, what they cannot and do not want to do.

After the US "war against terror" started, President Putin was faced with an ambivalent reaction in Moscow to his pro-American

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See Table 1, p. 178.

line. This time, some politicians called it a political gesture, signaling displeasure and asking what Russia would do in the close future - especially if the current thaw between Russia and the West began to chill. Today, it is still unclear what impact this new political turn has on the minds of millions of Russians, many, if not the majority, of whom do not trust the USA after all their earlier experiences. Russians ask why the US is looking for sophisticated new weapons and looking to create a national missile shield, why NATO continues to add new members, and so on. Defence experts are alarmed over the possibility of NATO forces being deployed too close to Russia's heartlands, and they have some grounds for such a fear because NATO's new military doctrine enshrines an expanded sphere of activity of the alliance beyond its members' borders.

However, there is no need to overemphasize anti-Western sentiments among Russians. Polls show that Russians worry more about domestic problems than external enemies, and their real security concerns are Islamic terrorists, drug traffic and illegal immigration from neighbouring countries, not with the West.

Russian policy toward the West is not exclusively focused on issues of international terrorism or NATO and EU enlargement. This is just part, although a key part, of a broader context. The fundamental national interest of Russia is to preserve and develop good relations, if not a strategic alliance, with leading Western countries and their coalitions to cope with challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Table 1 here:

# **Slovenian Public On Security, Defence and Military Issues**

**Ljubica Jelušič**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Slovenia established its independent national security system in 1991. From the very beginning, public opinion of the system has played a crucial role in setting the parameters of acceptable solutions within the national security system. Public opinion was an important element of civil society in Slovenia at the end of 1980s, when the resistance towards the totalitarian former Yugoslav security system had risen to its peak. The war within the former Yugoslavia was on the horizon and Slovenia had to mobilise its policemen, military reservists and territorial component of the armed forces in order to fight against the intervening Yugoslav military. The successful military, diplomatic and information warfare activities in the June-July 1991 Ten-Day War for independence helped to legitimise the new military in Slovenian public opinion.

The Slovenian national security system passed through different phases of establishment and reform, in which the military subsystem was most affected. In all phases, public opinion was regularly measured<sup>254</sup> and, in many cases, Slovenian public opinion helped to shape the outcome of the national security system. The impact was indirect, which means that the governmental and parliamentary political elite relied a lot on public opinion and used it as the argument in favour of projected reforms.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> The trends of public opinion developments in Slovenia are usually presented through reliable and representative data, surveyed in the Slovenian Public Opinion Poll, the omnibus survey that for more than 30 years collected data on public opinion with face-to-face interviews on a representative sample of around 1050 Slovenian citizens over 18 years. The surveys are conducted by the Centre for Public Opinion and Mass Communication Research, Institute of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. The Survey, known as SJM (Slovensko javno mnenje – Slovenian Public Opinion), is conducted every year with a repeated set of questions, and with an added battery of questions on some specific topics. For example, the questions on the national security of Slovenia, to which we are going to refer in this paper, were conducted in the Polls of December 1990/January 1991, December 1994/January 1995, May/June 1999, October/November 2001.

<sup>255</sup> The most recent case to confirm this thesis is the Governmental decision in April 2002 to abolish compulsory military service. The abolishment was decided under the pressure of public rejection of the service.

## SECURITY REFORMS: BETWEEN REMNANTS OF THE PAST AND RADICAL MODERNITY

There are three main lessons which the security sector of Slovenia learned on the way to independence and which served as the cornerstones for the establishing and transformation of national security in the period of 1991 – 2002.

### **Balance of Public Expectations**

The first one is the equilibrium of satisfying the imperatives,<sup>256</sup> ascribed to the armed forces in civilian society. The problem was inherited from the former Yugoslavia, where the armed forces, officially called *Jugoslovenska narodna armija* (JNA) pursued mainly the functional imperative to keep the state's territorial integrity by all military means. The JNA also fulfilled the political expectations of certain of the political elite in the sense that it was involved in political affairs of state, but, it failed to recognise the social expectations and expectations of the Slovenian population regarding political neutrality.<sup>257</sup> After the Ten-Day War,<sup>258</sup> the JNA lost the majority of its manpower in Slovenia, which revealed the absolute loss of JNA's legitimacy within Slovenian society. Slovenian politicians and military elite learned that in order to have an efficient and legitimate armed force, there must be a certain level of equally satisfied social, political and functional expectations. Beside, the JNA served as the example of the unacceptable military, which means that the Slovenian ideal of the military was anti-JNA military.

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<sup>256</sup> The term imperative describes society's expectations regarding the tasks of the armed forces, where the social imperative concerns the social, traditional and historical tasks of the military within society, and the functional imperative describes expectations relating to the military security of a country. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State, The Theory and Practice of Civil-Military Relations*. (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1957, cit. 1995).

<sup>257</sup> The popular term used to describe the desired political neutrality of the JNA was "depolitisation" of the military.

<sup>258</sup> Ten-Day War was the armed conflict of minor size, which began on 27 June 1991 and finished on 6 July 1991, where the opposing sides were the JNA and federal Yugoslav special police forces on one side, and Slovenian police, Territorial Defence Units and citizens on the other side. The official name of Territorial Defence was *Teritorialna obramba* (TO) and it remained the name of the newly established armed forces of Slovenia until 1994.



## **Defence Self-Reliance**

The second basis was the importance of relying on the country's own forces when exposed to outside aggression from without. It was a historical lesson, carried on from World War II when Slovenian Partisan units together with progressive political and social forces fought against German, Italian and Hungarian occupation. This again proved valid in 1991, when there was psychological and political support from some important international players, but there was also a lot of international political disagreement concerning Slovenia's attempts towards independence. The military tactics, inherited from Partisan guerrilla movement, were deployed again as territorial defence. Therefore, territorial defence tactics served as the successful role model of the military defence, and it routed the doctrine of Slovenian national security after 1991.

## **National Security as a Balanced System of Military and Non-Military Measures**

The third factor was the national defence doctrine in toto, learned in the former Yugoslavia, and which proved to be successful in the Ten-Day War, as the resistance of all parts of society, with all possible military and non-military means. It was the prerequisite for forming national security system as a balance of measures against military and non-military threats. The military subsystem of national security in Slovenia was, from its very beginning, never seen as a central national or state institution. The process, termed as the 'secularisation of the military' was incorporated into the basis of the military establishment.<sup>259</sup>

## **Phases of Development**

The national security system of independent Slovenia went through different phases of formation and change. The first period, June-July of the Ten-Day War for Independence, 1991, and March 1994 was marked by the establishing of the main subsystems, such as the defence, police and social security system. The defence system of Slovenia, as established in 1991, comprised of: civil defence (the framework for all important national enterprises in national security, such as telecommunication, railway, energy and other services, all these enterprises supported the military organisation and fulfilled their

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<sup>259</sup> Karl W. Haltiner, *Milizarmee: Bürgerleitbild oder angeschlagenes Ideal?* (Frauenfeld: Verlag Huber, 1985) 39.

own defence related obligations); rescue and self-protection (a system of organisations and individuals obliged to work in the event of natural and other disasters); and military organisation, territorial defence (Teritorialna obramba, TO).

Up until January 1992 Slovenia existed without international recognition. After the initial wave of recognitions shown by EU members (15 January 1992) and the United States (7 April 1992), Slovenia soon became a member of the UN (1992), the Council of Europe (1993), the World Trade Organization (1994), and the Central European Free Trade Association (1995). It also established a closer relationship with the EU, first by signing a Cooperation Agreement in 1993 and then a Europe Agreement in 1995. After January 1992, the possibilities for guaranteeing its security changed considerably, although Slovenia had little if any space for manoeuvre in reconsidering its own defences because it was held firmly under an arms embargo introduced by the UN against all the republics of the former Yugoslavia.<sup>260</sup> This affected Slovenia both politically and militarily. Although the Slovenian TO enjoyed the image of an army that defeated the JNA, it remained vulnerable, armed with old, mainly personal light weaponry, with no air defence system, no air force, and no navy.

The newly established defence system has shown some characteristics radically different from the former Yugoslavian one. For instance, defence education was immediately abolished in primary, secondary and high schools. Compulsory military service was shortened to 7 months (in the former JNA it had been 12 months). The recruits served very close to their homes – whereas in the JNA recruits have served very far from home. A conscientious objection was allowed on a very broad basis, including humanitarian, religious and philosophic motives. Alternative civil service was of the same length as military duty and could be fulfilled within a wide range of organisations. In the former Yugoslavia, conscientious objection was not allowed until the very end of the state when military authorities finally recognised objections on a religious basis and established non-armed military duty for objectors.

The basic documents to set the legal basis of the Slovenian national security system were adopted in the first phase of defence reforms, among them the most important are Articles 92, 102, 123, and 124 of the Slovenian Constitution (adopted in December 1991), the Defence Act (1991, adapted in 1994, and 2002), and the Act on Military Duty. The main characteristics of the national security system

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<sup>260</sup> The UN arms embargo was approved by the UN Security Council Resolution 713 of 25 September 1991 and was lifted by the Security Council Resolution 1021 of 22 November 1995.

remained the same until 2002. Although there was some discussion and inclination to re-establish the subsystem of rescue and self-protection as a governmental agency outside the defence sector, it stayed part of the defence system, and as a defence budget consumer.

The second period of national security reforms between, March 1994 and the end of 2000, was characterised by the prevalence of international input. The reforms were connected with the possibility of Slovenia becoming a member of different international security and political integrations, like NATO (after signing the Partnership for Peace (PfP) Framework Document on 30 March 1994); the EU (negotiations with the EU on possible accession), and United Nations (UN) (the non-permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (1998-1999)). Parallel to the national security reform involving a change of direction from the earlier self-reliance doctrine of total national defence into collective security and defence in international alliances, there was huge reform and restructuring of the military taking place at that time. The end of 1994 was marked by the amended Defence Act, which changed the name of the defence forces from “Teritorialna obramba” to “Slovenska vojska” (SV), i.e. the Slovenian Army. It meant the end of guerrilla tactics and the development of the standing constabulary force.

Throughout 1993, the Slovenian Government began informal co-operation with NATO and at the end of the year the idea of seeking NATO membership became a doctrinal issue. In December 1993, the National Parliament adopted the Resolution on the Principles of National Security, and within that framework formalised accession to NATO as one of the key goals of Slovenia’s foreign and defence policy. In July 1994, the Government of Slovenia presented to the NATO its reasons for accession to the PfP Programme, implementation of measures for its realisation as well as planned activities in military and civilian fields. In order to be more organisationally prepared for international security activities and to establish military organisation on the principles of a standing army, Slovenia decided to establish bigger military professional corps, mainly of soldiers, NCOs and officers. By the end of 1994, a special military unit was organised, named the 10<sup>th</sup> battalion for International Cooperation whose duty it was to train and cooperate in international military exercises, in units of bilateral or multilateral military co-operation, such as peacekeeping operations. This was the first main military reform of the Slovenian defence sector.

In May 1995, the first individual partner programme on cooperation between Slovenia and NATO was adopted, stressing the adjustment of the defence system and military structure, education, military exercises, standardisation, civil-military relations according to NATO’s expectations. This document meant the beginning of Slove-

nia's path to NATO and the start of investment in NATO membership. When the NATO Study on Enlargement was presented to partner-states in September 1995, the Slovenian political elite evaluated Slovenia as being well prepared according to prescribed conditions for NATO membership. Certain of being one of the best candidates for joining NATO, the Slovenian Parliament decided to strengthen the country's desire for NATO membership by adopting the Decision to ensure Slovenia's fundamental security interest within the framework of the collective defence system enabled by NATO membership. In April 1997, the newly elected National Parliament again confirmed the willingness of Slovenia to become a NATO member by adopting the Declaration of Parliamentary Parties in Support of Slovenia's Integration into NATO. The Madrid NATO Declaration mentioned Slovenia as, not yet, an invited candidate for NATO membership. The failure to be invited to join NATO had a sobering effect on Slovenian public opinion and the political elite, but it did not stop the active co-operation of the Slovenian Army in NATO activities. Furthermore, the Slovenian Army began its cooperation in peacekeeping operations under NATO command (Stabilisation force (SFOR) in Bosnia-Herzegovina in October 1997, continued in Kosovo Force (KFOR) in Kosovo in 1999).

Slovenian participation in peacekeeping operations dates from 1997. The first deployment was for the ALBA operation in Albania under Italian leadership (May-July 1997) where a medical unit participated as a battalion aid station and, after September 1997, larger numbers and units of service members were sent to the United Nations Forces in Cyprus (UNFICYP) operation. The Slovenian contingents participated within the Austrian battalion and, along with the withdrawal of Austrian troops from UNFICYP in June 2001 Slovenia also stopped sending its troops to Cyprus.<sup>261</sup> SV has participated by sending two officers as observers in the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) since 1998 and one officer to the United Nations Mission In Macedonia (UNMIK) with since 1999. It is participating in SFOR with the air force transport facilities (three helicopters and one transport airplane) since 1997 (44 soldiers involved); with a military police platoon in a Multinational Specialised Unit (MSU) since 1999 (26 soldiers and officers) and a medical unit in SFOR (12 people) since 2000. In June 2001, the Minister of Defence decided to increase the participation of military police in the MSU by two platoons. In November 2000, civilian police from Slovenia also participated in UNMIK (15 police officers), which is another important shift in Slovenian national security policy as a whole. The international

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<sup>261</sup> There were eight contingents, each of around 30 soldiers, NCOs and officers deployed in this operation.

military cooperation of Slovenian defence forces is the most important result of restructuring in the second phase of defence sector reforms. In particular, the cooperation in peacekeeping operations has helped to restore the decreasing military legitimacy and, together with the NATO Membership Action Plan, gave new motivation to the professional soldiers, NCOs and officers of SV. Up to 2001, a high number of SV soldiers (361) gained personal experience from peace missions.

SV also contributes its units to the multinational joint peacekeeping formations<sup>262</sup> in the region to verify interoperability in the future European defence capabilities. Slovenian reasons to cooperate in these collaborative ventures are not only connected with peacekeeping, but also with promoting its interest for integration into Western security organisations.<sup>263</sup> Participation in NATO-led missions has an additional diplomatic role, it demonstrates that SV units could be easily integrated and be interoperable with NATO forces.<sup>264</sup>

The third phase of national security reforms began in 2000, when the new Government after the November 2000 elections was put in office. The new Defence Minister Anton Grizold, announced the professionalisation of the military and an increase in the level of defence expertise in his Directives for the further development of the country's defence sector (February 2001). The aims of the reforms are to create defence forces, small in size, but well armed, equipped and trained. The focus is on professional units, which have to recruit rank and file soldiers. The restructuring process should finish with 25,000 service members (including 7,000 professionals, 5,000 recruits under compulsory military service, and the rest being reserve soldiers). This announcement aims to make the biggest reduction in the size of the armed forces in 10 years, cutting back the mass army of 56,000 soldiers seen in 1998 to less than half in a 5-year period. It also initiated debates on doing away with compulsory military service in autumn 2001, reopened again in February 2002. In order to clarify the status of professional soldiers, the Defence Act has to be changed. The system of military education and training of draftees was radically altered in July 2001. The former system of dispersed education in 22 different battalions throughout Slovenia (which led to very different levels of military effectiveness) was replaced by a system of common basic education in four big training centres and advanced military education

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<sup>262</sup> Such unit is the Multinational Land Force (MLF), a joint effort of Italian, Slovenian and Hungarian military, where the soldiers are trained together for rapid deployment in peace support operations.

<sup>263</sup> Paul Latawski, 'Bilateral and Multilateral Peacekeeping Units in Central and Eastern Europe'. In: D.S.Gordon and F.H.Toase (eds.), *Aspects of Peacekeeping* (London, Portland: Frank Cass, 2001): 74.

<sup>264</sup> Ivan Hostnik, 'Participation in Peace Support Operations', Slovenia and NATO, NATO'S NATIONS and Partners for Peace. Special Issue 1 (2002): 34.

in different military units. The efforts invested in the reform of the recruits' military education lowered in April 2002, when the Government of Slovenia decided to abolish conscription. The Parliament agreed with the decision that, without any significant public debate, June 2004 will be marked by the call-up of the last draftees to military duty, and the year 2010 as the end of duty for service in reserve units. The last reform will lead to an army of 7,000 professionals and 19.000 volunteer and paid reservists.

In eleven years of development and reforms, the Slovenian national security system has changed from a traditional territorial guerilla national defence system to a predominantly professionalised system of national defence, with the clear intention of focusing more on the cooperation in multinational military formations and peace support operations than on traditional territorial defence.

According to the doctrinal documents, cooperation in peace support operations will stay as one of the predominant tasks of the Slovenian military and foreign policy. For example, the Annual National Programme for the Implementation of the NATO Membership Action Plan 2001-2002<sup>265</sup> says, that Slovenia will contribute a total of 140 participants to peace support operations in 2002, of whom 112 will be personnel of the SV and 30 of the Slovenian Police. In January 2003, an additional infantry company (110 members) is supposed to join the SFOR units.

## PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THREAT

There is a change in public perception of threat in Slovenia in the past decade. The perception of the military threat is decreasing and the perception of social, political, ecological and other non-military threat is replacing the awareness of the military threat.

The military threat from the former Yugoslav military was perceived as the most serious threat during the Ten-Day War for independence and until the retreat of JNA units from Slovenia in October 1991. After that period, the perception of military threats as dangerous to the Slovenian society decreased and non-military threats became more pressing. Although there was still substantial military activity in Croatia and in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1994, the survey from the end of 1994 showed that military threats from other states were not perceived as significant. Twelve per cent of the respondents identified military threats as strong threats, 28 % as medium, and 33 % as weak.<sup>266</sup> The same poll showed that economic problems, crime, and environmental destruction were perceived as the most dangerous

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<sup>265</sup> <http://www.nato.gov.si/slo/publikacije/slovenija-nato/> (2 May 2002).

<sup>266</sup> Slovenian Public Opinion Poll Data Archives. The Survey was conducted in December 1994 and January 1995.

threats. This was the first radical turn into perception of non-military threats as the strongest threats to affect Slovenian security, which was repeated in the 1999 and 2001 Slovenian Public Opinion Poll. Even in the 1999 Survey, the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, with some potential of military over-spill were perceived as a weak threat,<sup>267</sup> despite the NATO air campaign against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) at that time.

The 1999 Survey measured the perception of military threats to Slovenia<sup>268</sup> by naming all neighbouring states and some major powers on the list of potential aggressors. Respondents were supposed to consider, if a certain country was a potentially strong, medium, weak or not at all a threat at all to Slovenia. Results show that no particular state posed a strong or even medium military threat to Slovenia. Even the FRY was seen as presenting a strong military threat by only a minute percentage (6.%) of respondents. An even smaller percentage of respondents (5.7 %) saw Croatia as a strong military threat to Slovenia, while the percentages for other states were between 1.7 % (Russia) and 0.1 % (Hungary). On average, no threat was perceived as stronger than a small military threat: all the mean values lie between the options "small military threat" and "no threat at all". The main change took place in the perception of the military threat posed by the FRY, which was in 1994/95 a strong threat for 22 % of the Slovenian public. A similar change occurred in the perception of a strong military threat coming from Russia: it decreased from 8 % in 1994/95 to 2 % in 1999.<sup>269</sup>

The surveys of 1999 and 2001 measured the perception of terrorism as a possible threat to Slovenia. The data show that terrorism is, together with the conflicts on the territory of the former Yugoslavia and the military threats of other countries, the weakest perceived threat to Slovenian security. On a scale of 19 possible threats it was ranked 17<sup>th</sup>. The threatening factors were ranked in the following order, from the strongest to the weakest one: drugs and narcotics, crime, traffic accidents, unemployment, deterioration of the environment, poverty, low birth rate, economic problems, suicides, sell-out of social property, natural and technological disasters, refugees and illegal immigrants, internal political instability, contagious diseases, like AIDS,

<sup>267</sup> The public opinion survey was conducted between 21 May and 18 June 1999.

<sup>268</sup> The question was: »What is the extent of potential military threat to Slovenia from the following states: Italy, Croatia, Austria, Hungary, FRY, Russia, Germany, China, USA; big, medium, weak, not at all threat«

<sup>269</sup> The detailed explanation of the data is published in: Anton Grizold, Iztok Prezelj, 'Public Opinion and the National Security of Slovenia'. In: Marjan MALEŠIČ (ed.), *International Security, Mass Media and Public Opinion*. (Ljubljana: ERGOMAS/University of Ljubljana, 2000): Pp.149- 165.

falling behind in the field of science and technology, extreme nationalism, terrorism, conflicts on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, the military threats of other countries.<sup>270</sup>

In general, Slovenian citizens feel safer than they did in the past. They are increasingly aware of non-military sources of threat, notably ecological and socio-economic threats, crime, natural and manmade disasters, the sale and use of drugs, internal political instability, the possibility of social unrest, and a falling behind in the area of science and technology. Respondents do not attribute major importance to external military threats. The question of threats is important since we may hypothetically assume that the level of perceived military threat will influence the public's attitude to Slovenia's membership of NATO, which in the first place is an institution of collective (military) defence, and it may influence the acceptance of the SV as the main provider of military security of Slovenia.

#### NATO MEMBERSHIP IN THE PUBLIC EYE

The political decision to seek NATO membership was supported by the majority of public opinion in 2001, but there are still doubts and scepticism about the advantages and disadvantages of the membership in it. The public opinion is prepared to support obligations towards NATO very selectively.

Data on the attitude of the Slovenian public to NATO are available from 1994 onwards. At that time, two thirds of respondents agreed with the statement, that Slovenia has to look after its own defence, even if this costs more, than to become dependent on the West (NATO) security guarantees. Roughly a year later, (in January 1995), the majority of respondents believed that the NATO Alliance would strengthen its political role in Europe and expand with the inclusion of certain eastern European countries. Slovenia was supposed to be among them, too. Public support of government efforts for NATO membership was not very high. Only relative majority of the public (44 per cent) supported the idea, 9 per cent was against it, and the rest indifferent.<sup>271</sup>

These figures show that the support was by no means as high as among the political elite and state officials working in the area of national security, who were, at least officially, nearly all in favour of the NATO membership. This result did not accord with their expectations and in fact represented shock and disappointment, since it became

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<sup>270</sup> The ranking was made according to the average value on the scale, where 1 meant "not at all threat", 2 meant "a weak threat", 3 meant "a medium threat", and 4 meant "a strong threat". Data are from Slovenian public Opinion Poll Data Archives.

<sup>271</sup> Slovenian Public Opinion Poll Data Archives.



obvious that public support for NATO membership was not something automatic and that it would be necessary to justify the idea more systematically and professionally. It is interesting to note that almost half the respondents were indifferent or undecided despite the fact that this was one of the country's most important foreign policy projects since the achievement of independence in 1991.

Certain trends in public opinion relating to support for the government in its efforts for NATO membership for Slovenia can be summarised as follows: (1) from October 1996 to March 1997 public support for the government's efforts was relatively high and stable, (2) the level of opposition to government policy regarding NATO was relatively low (approximately a fifth of respondents) and stable in this period, (3) the group of undecided respondents in this period was relatively high (approximately one fifth of respondents), (4) in October and November 1997 support for Slovenian membership of NATO fell perceptibly, while opposition did not increase and the group of undecided respondents grew larger. This result was almost certainly influenced by the decision of the North Atlantic Council at its meeting in Madrid not to invite Slovenia to be one of the candidates for the first round of NATO enlargement since the end of the Cold War. In 1999, the support for NATO membership increased slightly on account of the Air Campaign against FRY,<sup>272</sup> but it was followed by a very stable trend of decreasing public support for NATO membership. In 2002, it was accompanied by increasing opposition to NATO membership. In the 2001 Survey, 53 per cent of the respondents supported NATO membership, one fourth of them were against, and nearly the same percentage of the population was undecided. The demographic features of the public would show that the population groups under 30 and over 60 years of age are more in favour of membership than other age groups. More educated people are less in favour of the idea than less educated ones, and the male population is much more in favour of the membership than the female. The female population does not oppose the idea more than the male, however, the majority of undecided are women. In urban areas the support is higher than in rural areas, and housewives and farmers seem to be the most undecided groups. The more people are satisfied with their life in Slovenia, the higher the support for NATO membership. Also, it is obvious that support for the membership grows from the left side of the political spectrum to the right one.<sup>273</sup>

In order to increase public acceptance of NATO membership, the Slovenian government launched a public information campaign in

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<sup>272</sup> Slovenian public opinion was among the rare publics in Europe where the NATO air strike caused greater public acceptance of NATO.

<sup>273</sup> Slovenian Public Opinion Poll Data Archives and Defence Research Centre (University of Ljubljana, Institute of Social Sciences) Data Archives, 2001.

April 2001. The target public are a domestic audience of NATO sceptics and undecided citizens and opinion and decision makers in NATO member countries. The aim of the campaign was to increase the majority of votes in favour of NATO membership in case of public request for the referenda on this issue. The Public Opinion surveys show that the certainty of organising the referenda on possible NATO and/or EU integration is increasing. According to the 2001 Slovenian Public Opinion Survey, 18 % of respondents thought that the National Parliament should decide on Slovenia's membership in NATO. More than seven out ten (73 %) would support the idea that the decision to join NATO should be taken by the plebiscitary decision of the citizens. The polls are indicating a not very persuasive percentage of positive votes, which causes some anxiety among politicians, commentators and foreign observers. There are some warning signals, especially from the US government, that the Slovenian public opinion support for a NATO option is not high enough.

The correlation between the perception of threat and support for NATO was analysed on the basis of the hypothesis that an increased perception of military threat raises public support for joining NATO. A variance analysis of the data shows that the level of NATO support does not statistically correlate with perceptions of different threats. Most surprisingly, there is no correlation between the perception of military threats and NATO support. There is a statistically significant correlation between NATO support and three types of threat: environmental destruction, the lagging behind in science and technology and domestic political instability. Respondents opposing NATO membership are more aware of the aforementioned three threats. We speculate that the reasons for such a correlation would be in the belief of the respondents that NATO membership does not represent an effective way of tackling environmental and developmental problems. Why is it then that the Slovenian public supports the efforts made to join NATO if it is not because of the perception of military threats?

Respondents in the 1999 Slovenian Public Opinion Polls considered claims about the advantages and disadvantages of NATO membership. Respondents agreed most with the claims that in the case of Slovenia joining NATO the SV would have easier access to modern weapons, that the military security of the country would be strengthened, that its reputation in the international community would increase and that this would ease the Slovenian approach to European integrations. The majority of respondents also agreed that NATO membership would increase the share of the budget used for defence purposes, that, given the small size of the country, the placing of NATO military bases would represent too great a loss of national territory, that membership would require cooperation in military operations outside the territory of Slovenia, that Slovenian companies would be able

to cooperate in the military projects of NATO member states, and that Slovenia's armed forces would become more efficient. Fewer agreed with the claim that NATO would establish military bases in Slovenia which would represent an ecological burden on the environment, and even fewer that the personnel of these bases would be a disturbing factor in the social environment, or that the establishing of military bases would provide jobs for the local population. Fewest of all agreed with the claim that NATO membership would limit Slovenia's sovereignty.

The attitudes towards NATO membership are in correlation with the attitudes towards defence spending. A relative majority of the public surveyed in 2001 was in favour of reducing or ideally preserving the level of defence spending, in particular with regard to military defence, while the demand for a reduction in spending on non-military (civil) defence was slightly less marked. As the Government announced a need for increased defence spending in the case of NATO membership, but also in case, when Slovenia would have to take care of its security for itself, public opinion data actually shows a gap between the government's defence spending projections for forthcoming years and public reluctance towards paying more for defence.

#### PUBLIC TRUST OF SECURITY INSTITUTIONS

The public opinion poll in 1999 asked respondents about their level of satisfaction with the performance of the Slovenian armed forces. Forty per cent of respondents seemed to be very or rather satisfied with the performance of the SV, whereas only 14 % were not at all or rather not satisfied. The standard Slovenian Public Opinion Survey, carried out annually, shows, that the SV is among the top three institutions regarded with trust by the public. The first two are usually the Slovenian currency, tolar, and the Slovenian president. The question is, if the expressed trust coincides with the ability of SV to guarantee Slovenian security. According to the public opinion, economic and political stability of Slovenia are much more important for the security and international prestige of Slovenia than its defence and security mechanisms. When asked, who has the decisive role in preserving Slovenian sovereignty and independence, the public opinion would put the citizens of Slovenian on the first place (34 per cent) and the military on the last place (2 per cent) among six evaluated actors.<sup>274</sup>

In the year 2000, there was a special public opinion survey made among secondary school pupils, in which they were asked to rate the prestige of the SV on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 meant very low pres-

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<sup>274</sup> Slovenian Public Opinion Poll Data Archives, 2001.

tige and 10 very high prestige. The mean value was 5.86<sup>275</sup> meaning that teenagers perceived the SV as an organisation with more than average prestige in the country. Four out of five argued that Slovenia needs its own military.

Public satisfaction with the performance of the armed forces may be measured by indirect indicators. There is a question in the Slovenian Public Opinion Survey in which respondents assess the ways of achieving effective military security for Slovenia. In the 2001 Survey, 74 per cent of the public viewed good relations with neighbouring countries as the most effective way of assuring military security. Defence agreements with other countries were important for 48 per cent of the respondents and 40 per cent considered military security provided by NATO membership. Less than one third of respondents (32 per cent) thought the SV would be the most effective guarantor of military security.<sup>276</sup> In case of a military attack, the organisation, which would be the first to help Slovenia was, without much public doubt, NATO. Other organisations, such as the European Union, the UN Security Council, the OSCE, or the Council of Europe, were perceived as less significant participants. The conclusion is that the Slovenian public perceives NATO as the main provider of the country's military security.

## THE ROLES OF THE ARMED FORCES

The perception of military roles has changed on account of the changed perception of threats in the past decade, and because of the changed geostrategic environment. Public support for classic territorial defence missions is reduced. Instead, peace support missions are perceived as the new operational task and as complementary to territorial defence. The expectations about some social tasks, like disaster relief are unchanged and very high, whereas the expectations, that military would continue with some other social tasks, like patriotic education, are far lower than a decade ago.

A Slovenian Public Opinion Poll followed the trend in the perception of military roles from 1982 onwards. The data<sup>277</sup> available help

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<sup>275</sup> With a Standard Deviation of 2.02. The data are part of the project Slovenska mladina in vojaški poklic (Slovenian Youth and the Military Profession), University of Ljubljana, Institute of Social Sciences, Defence Research Centre Data Archives, 2000.

<sup>276</sup> Slovenian Public Opinion Poll Data Archives, 2001.

<sup>277</sup> All data on Question "How much do you agree with the following tasks of the contemporary armed forces?" are from Slovenian Public Opinion Poll Data Archives, 1982 – 2002. The respondents usually evaluate the tasks through agreement with the statements, such as: military should help in the case of natural, ecological and other disasters; the military should defend the country in the case of attack; the

to understand the changes in public opinion not only with regard to the Slovenian military but also facilitate a comparison of the attitudes of the Slovenian population in the past, while experiencing another military organisation on its territory, the JNA.

### **Priority of Disaster Relief**

The most welcome task of the military is the “traditional” non-military task of disaster relief. The use of the term “traditional” specifically regards Slovenian public opinion, because this task has, for thirty years, received the highest consensus among respondents. The percentage of those, who agreed, that this task is a military task, was always higher than 80%. In the 2001 Survey, 93 per cent of respondents were of the same opinion. There are, at least three explanations for this public attitude. First, it is the European trend. In Western European countries disaster relief is one of the postmodern military operations other than war. According to the Eurobarometer 54.1 (the public opinion poll of the European Union countries, which, in 2001, measured the EU citizens’ attitudes towards security issues), this task also receives much attention from the public; the average acceptance of it was 91 per cent in all EU countries.<sup>278</sup> Secondly, Slovenia is very much under threat of potential natural catastrophes (floods, earthquakes, dry seasons, and storms) and there are always many opportunities for the military to exercise this operational task. Thirdly, the military itself always made great efforts to be present in the regions affected by disasters, because it was the source of its legitimacy and a channel for direct communication with public.

### **Farewell to Territorial Defence?**

In its first decade of development, the SV focused upon the tasks, which strengthened its ability to defend the country in case of an armed attack. until 1995 especially, when Slovenia was under the UN arms embargo, the training for territorial guerrilla warfare was the

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military should care for its combat readiness and should not interfere in the political situation of the country; the military should cooperate in international peace and humanitarian operations; the military should fight against terrorism, and assist police in border control against illegal immigrants; military should assist police in maintaining law and order; the military should educate young people in patriotism; making roads, help with harvesting; if necessary, it should take state power in its hands; and it should replace workers on strike.

<sup>278</sup> For details see: Philippe Manigart, *Europeans and a Common Security and Defence Policy* (Brussels: Royal Military Academy, Chair of Sociology, 2001).

only possible way of maintaining combat readiness, although on a very low technological basis. Public opinion supported this task to a very high degree until 1999, when the percentage of those in agreement with this military task was 95 per cent. The perceptibly lower acceptance of this task is recognised in the Survey of 2001, with only 88 per cent of those, agreeing with it. What could have changed public opinion so much in two years, if there was only a two per cent decrease in the previous ten years (in 1988, 97 per cent; in 1999, 95 per cent)? There are plenty of explanations, among which only a few seem most probable. First, the end of military threat from Europe reduced the importance of readiness for a conflict against invaders. Then, the possibility of NATO membership for Slovenia is bigger in the second round of enlargement and Slovenia would have to contribute to the common Alliance defence, and not to care solely for its own the defence. Third, national security is defended outside its territory, in the peace support operations in the region, where peace and stability have to be preserved.

### **Peace Support Operations**

In 1997, the Slovenian Government invested much effort in preparing the country for a possible invitation to NATO membership. The decision to contribute military units to peace support operations in the region, especially to the NATO-led missions, was part of these efforts. According to the Public Opinion Survey of 2001, the cooperation in international peace and humanitarian operations is the third most accepted military task. 77 per cent of respondents who with this task, and 7 per cent disagreed. When asked about Slovenian cooperation in international peacekeeping, there were 69 per cent of respondents in support. The most acceptable are humanitarian operations, in which the Slovenian Army would cooperate without the use of weapons (supported by 84 per cent of respondents). The cooperation of the SV in peace support operations, where the weapons would be used for self-defence only, is welcomed by 74 per cent of respondents. The support for cooperation in combat peace enforcement operations is much lower, only 39 per cent of respondents would agree with this possible international role of SV.

### **Police Assistance and the Fight Against Terrorism – Important Operations other than War**

The fight against terrorism as a military task is accepted by 74 per cent of respondents. It seems to be as similarly important as any another military task other than war, which is new for Europe, but already known of in Slovenian memory – that is police assistance in

border control against illegal immigration, accepted by 72 per cent of the respondents in 2001. There are some countries in Europe, where such internal police assistance operations were undertaken by the military, such as Italy, Ireland, Austria and Switzerland.<sup>279</sup> In the former Yugoslavia, the JNA had special border control units, which were situated along the whole Yugoslav border and controlled possible illegal immigration and emigration. It was a military task, because the immigrants were supposed to be terrorists against the regime. Nowadays, this task would mean only assisting the police, but in the Slovenian military deployment doctrine, it is impossible for the SV to carry out this task. The same is valid for internal police assistance in maintaining law and order, which is, in the public eye, acceptable by six out of ten respondents.

### **Regime Defence as an Unacceptable Role of the SV**

THE sv was built upon the premise that it should never serve the purposes of regime defence or any kind of internal police task. Slovenian Public Opinion seems to support this decision, because the tasks such as the take-over of state power in the case of crisis and the involvement of soldiers in the economy in the case of workers' strikes were rejected by nine out of ten respondents of the Slovenian Public Opinion Poll in 2001. There are some other non-military roles, such as participation in road building, harvesting and other public work, and patriotic education of young people, which are, according to the Slovenian public opinion, becoming marginal military tasks. For example, in 1988, 74 per cent of respondents agreed that the military should develop patriotic education of young people. The percentage slowly decreased to 69 % in 1999, and afterwards, in two years fell radically to 58 % of those who agreed with this military task. It might be the effect of a very selectively fulfilled military service.

### **CONSCRIPTION VERSUS ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCES: THE CHALLENGE OF POSTMODERNITY**

There was no debate on the system of manning the armed forces in 1991. The continuation of compulsory military service was the only culturally accepted form of maintaining the massive forces needed in the case of JNA attacks. The draftees were proud of serving

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<sup>279</sup> Haltiner elaborated modern constabulary military roles in: Karl W. Haltiner, 'Policemen or Soldiers? Organizational Dilemmas in the Constabularization of Armed Forces', in: Marjan Malešič (ed.), *International Security, Mass Media, and Public Opinion*. (Ljubljana: ERGOMAS, University of Ljubljana, 2000) pp.18-19.

in the victorious military and very few (240) requested conscientious objection status in 1991. To show the difference from the former JNA, discipline within the barracks was very weak due to very limited sanctions against disobedient soldiers. Officers were reluctant to train draftees in any dangerous situation, being afraid of the media, which would portray possible accidents as a big social problem. This slowly changed the methods of training into very low key and a downgrade of military training, perceived by new generations of recruits as a waste of time. Their reaction was increasing refusal to carry out compulsory service, seen in the higher number of requests for the status of conscientious objection and a significant increase in those dropping out for medical reasons.<sup>280</sup> The prevailing manning of armed forces with conscripts becomes less matched to the security situation in Europe and the role of Slovenia in it, with value orientation of post-modern society and with new roles and missions of the contemporary armed forces.

Until 1999, the majority of the public supported universal military conscription as the most appropriate way of manning the SV. In 2001, a relative majority of respondents (48 per cent) opted for All-Volunteer Force (AVF), while the support for a conscript army decreased significantly to 34 per cent. The reasons for the change could be found in the above-mentioned arguments for crisis of conscript system in Slovenia, in experiences of other countries that abolished conscription, and in the intensive political and professional debate on the issue. Most probably, this new attitude toward AVF is indirectly related to the perception of threats and new roles of the military stemming from it. Surprisingly, the young population (age 18-29) is not more in favour of AVF than any other age groups, and the acceptance of AVF correlates positively with those of a higher level of education, higher income and the higher the position of the respondent on the social scale.<sup>281</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The public acceptance of the Slovenian national security system was relatively high throughout the decade of independence. It was formed as an anti-JNA system, but well rooted in the population, due to the total national defence doctrine, deployed in the victorious Ten-Day War for Independence in 1991. In the first half of this period, the perception of

<sup>280</sup> The number of applicants for conscientious objection status increased from 240 in 1991, to 2504 in 1999, and 3250 in 2001. Every fifth out of ten conscripts dropped out of service because of health reasons. Ljubica Jelušič, 'Mame ne bodo več prale vojaških oblek' [Mothers are not going to wash military cloth anymore], *Ona*, 4: 9 (5 March 2002): 12.

<sup>281</sup> Slovenian Public Opinion Poll Data Archives and Defence Research Centre Data Archives, 2001.



military threat from the Balkans influenced public acceptance of the military role to defend the country in case of attack, and also for public readiness to support political decisions, which would maintain the high security and stability of Slovenian society. Therefore, there was no big debate on preserving conscription as the main source of manning the armed forces, and a very sporadic debate on NATO membership. There were some political issues, in which public opinion was mainly that of an observer and supporter of decisions, for example, the NATO membership and cooperation in peace support operations. But there were also some other public issues, where public pressure caused political reform, as happened in case of abolishing conscription, decided in 2002. It is possible to summarise that a change in threat perception in the past decade, where the perception of the military threat is decreasing and the perception of social, political, ecological and other non-military threat is replacing the awareness of military threat, influenced the changed perception and support of different military missions. Public support for the homeland's defence is reduced, and the expectations concerning social tasks and peace missions are bigger than a decade ago. The trust in the Slovenian Army is high, although its public prestige rapidly decreased due to reluctance towards conscription. The political decisions to abolish conscription, and to form an all-volunteer army and to participate with it in peace support operations contributed to recovered military legitimacy.



# **Public Opinion On Security and Defence Issues in Serbia and Montenegro**

**Milorad Timotic, M.A.**

During the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the land of the former Yugoslavia (Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia –SFRY) was the site of the most turbulent political and military disturbances. In comparison with all former socialist countries, the SFRY suffered the bloodiest collapse of a federation based on the ethnic similarity of its constituent nations and basically on the communist ideology of socialist self-government. These events left an imprint on the beliefs, political and moral attitudes and convictions of the nations of the former Yugoslavia.

Various forms of military, para-military, police and para-police forces took part in the fighting and defence of the real or imaginary national and political goals of their nations. In that way they intended to create their own image and perception by their nations and ethnic groups. This process went on in all of the independent states of today, but with various results.

The army of Serbia and Montenegro – the Army of Yugoslavia – a remnant of the Yugoslav People's Army, waged war in Croatia and Kosovo, and its proxy and close ally, the Army of the Republic Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In spite of the fact that all the wars waged by the Serb and Montenegrin armies were neither glorious nor victorious, they somehow managed to preserve the traditional high respect and confidence of their nations.

The aim of this paper is to describe public perception of the defence- related issues, including the attitudes of the public and their perceptions of the security threats, of the Euro-Atlantic and regional defence integrations, the social and political role of the armed forces. One of the objectives of the paper is to describe and explain the trust of the people on the subject of the security institutions.

## **INTRODUCTORY EXPLANATIONS**

Most of the descriptions and explanations in this paper will be based on the results of public opinion polls conducted by the Institute

of Social Sciences in Belgrade. Necessary comparisons will be made with the results of other research institutions wherever available and appropriate. The sample of the Institute is very carefully selected and provides reliable results.

On the basis of a project and questionnaire, developed by the Centre for Civil-Military Relations (CCMR), a Belgrade NGO, the Centre for research of political and Public Opinion of the Belgrade Institute of Social Sciences (ISS), in the period from 3-10 March, 2001, conducted a survey using its standard representative sample of 1,680 Serbian citizens. The survey was conducted in 105 local communities, picked at random, on the territory of Serbia, excluding Kosovo and Metohija.

The Institute used a stratified three-tier quota sample. On level one, the proportions of the regions were defined. For instance, the sub-sample for Vojvodina included the regions of Bačka, Banat and Srem. On level two, municipalities were picked at random, and the result of their choice depended on the size of their population. Level three was used to select local communities applying the same principle, but this time on the municipalities concerned, again on the basis of cumulative frequencies. The quota criteria included the stratum (urban and other settlements), sex, age and education of respondents, based on the 1991 census, as corrected by demographic projections.

The sample is fairly representative of the adult population of Serbia with respect to sex (50% male and 50% female), age groups (21% under the age of 30, 19% between 30 and 39, 18% between 40 and 49, 17% between 50 and 59 and 25% over 60), the urban population constituted 57% and nationalities (Serbs 81%, Hungarians 7%, Yugoslavs 3%, Muslims 2%, Romany 2%, Croats 1%, Montenegrins 1% and 4% other), education (41% with or without elementary school, 45% with vocational qualifications or 4-year secondary school and 14%, high-school and university graduates).

The possible error with the kind of sample used in this survey is up to 3% for dichotomous variables.

The questionnaire, among other things, included questions relating to the security and defence of the country, the role of the army within the political system, the organisation of the Army of Yugoslavia (AY) and its approach to defence integrations in the region and Europe, and the observance of human rights in the AY and other. Views on issues related to the internal life of the AY and the respect for human rights in the service were provided by a sub-sample of respondents who served their term in the army or were commanding officers in it. The sub-sample comprised 698 respondents, which is quite sufficient to draw reliable conclusions.

The survey findings also allow us to draw conclusions on certain matters of defence and the army the public had no previous opportu-

nity to judge for a number of reasons including for example, the extraordinary circumstances prevailing in the country over the past ten years and the special position the army has traditionally enjoyed in this society. The about turn of October 5, 2000, requires appropriate changes in this respect, in order to enable the public of Serbia to express its views on, as large as possible, a number of questions related to security and defence as well as the army which is supposed to provide the same.

### PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE SECURITY THREATS

In order to have any opinion on the matter of change within the Yugoslav Army, it is necessary to have at least a rough idea about the people's appraisal of the international position of the country, i.e. about the security threats that could endanger it. In the CCMR and ISS poll that issue was examined by means of the following question: "Which are, today, in your opinion, the greatest dangers to the security of the FRY?"

The results of the poll clearly show that the public of Serbia sees the main threats to the security of the country in the internal uncertainties and political problems. According to the opinion of the respondents, the main problem which endangers the security of Yugoslavia is the unresolved status of Kosovo – 84,0% voted for that option. The second problem is the appearance and activity of Albanian separatists in Southern Serbia (73,7%), which was topical at the time of the survey, the beginning of March 2001. The third problem, according to the frequency of the respondents' answers (33,4%) is the possibility of conflict and instability in the ethnically mixed areas of the country. Only one tenth of the respondents opted for world war or a European war of broader dimensions as the sources of endangering the safety of the FRY. Equally, the respondents do not envision any chance of armed conflict against any of the neighbouring states.

In another survey, carried out by the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) within the project Eurobarometer, the citizens of Serbia were asked which foreign country represents a security threat to Serbia, in first place Albania ("To a great extent" – 30.1%, "To a very great extent" – 28.2%), then Kosovo (25,5% and 19.8%). The third place on the list of the security threats to Serbia was the US (17.8% and 22.1%). The results show that Serbian public opinion is still under the strong influence of the Milosevic's anti-American propaganda, and almost 40% of them perceive the USA policy toward Yugoslavia as a threat to the country.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> International IDEA, Survey Results, International issues, Serbia, [www.data.archive.ac.uk](http://www.data.archive.ac.uk)

It is interesting to note here that perception of the USA as a threat to the country is much lower in Montenegro (5,9% and 7,4%).<sup>283</sup> The difference is caused by the American discriminative approach to the regimes in Belgrade and Podgorica during Milosevic's rule. At that time Montenegro enjoyed a more favorable position on the part of the USA policy makers. During the intervention in Serbia, NATO attacked only a few purely military targets in Montenegro, so that the resentments of Montenegrins do not run so high as in Serbia.

Except for the USA, there is little inconsistency in the popular perception of security threats: fears of the possibility of a Greater Albania, connected with the Kosovo and South Serbia problems, are perceived as the major threat to the security of the country.

### HOW NATO AND THE EU ARE PERCEIVED

In the quoted public opinion poll (CCMR, ISS), there was one question which measured, indirectly, the attitudes of the public toward NATO. In this question the respondents were asked in which direction to undertake the necessary changes in Yugoslav defence policy. The respondents were offered the most probable options and had to decide among them.

A substantial majority of the respondents (74,9%), considered that changes in defence policy should be undertaken and that they should be directed towards a gradual inclusion into European defensive integrations, and primarily into the PfP. The percentage (12,4%) of those who consider it necessary to prepare for joining NATO is not negligible, bearing in mind the memories of its armed intervention in Yugoslavia in 1999. Other options attracted less respondents. It is interesting to note that a very small number of respondents (5,5%) chose the option of strengthening the alliance with Russia – the traditional friend and ally of the Serb people. It would not be advisable to draw conclusions on the basis of one public opinion poll, but probably some members of the public became disillusioned with the Russian inability to prevent the NATO intervention in 1999.

The age of the respondents was reflected in their answers: while 3,8% of the youngest respondents plead for strengthening the alliance with Russia, a corresponding percentage of the oldest ones amounts to 12,9%. 76% of the youngest respondents opted in favor of European integrations and PfP membership, while 63.2% of the older respondents did so. That response is most frequently chosen by the respondents in the age bracket 40 to 49 years (85,7%). The option of preparation for NATO membership is most frequently chosen by respond-

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<sup>283</sup> International IDEA, Survey Results, International Issues, Montenegro, the same web address

ents up to the age of 29 (14,9%) and from 30 to 39 years (16,0%). These trends speak sufficiently for themselves.

In another poll of public opinion in Serbia, on a similar sample of the citizens of Serbia, carried out by the Center for Policy Studies, NGO, Belgrade, at the end of October 2000, the beginning of July 2001 and the end of August 2001, the citizens were asked a similar question. Due to a somewhat different wording of the question the answers varied slightly, but 'Eurocentric' orientation prevailed. 25-18% of respondents opted for independent defence, for alliance with Russia, 9-5%, and for "joining European defence alliances (PfP, NATO)" a steady percentage in all three polls (42%, 43%, 43%). This percentage was somewhat lower than in the Centre's poll due to different wording of the question. Methodologically, it makes more sense to separate joining the PfP from joining NATO because of different criteria that are applied to each of the options. Namely, the criteria for joining NATO are much stronger and stricter preconditions have to be fulfilled, so joining both integrations in one question may have somehow confused the respondents.<sup>284</sup> On the other hand, in the minds of ordinary people in Serbia, the memories of the NATO intervention in 1999 are still vivid as are also the ensuing negative attitudes toward it.

The common denominator for both polls (Centre's and CPS's) is that, in spite of the long-standing anti-western propaganda of Milosevic's regime, and the NATO armed intervention in 1999, the majority of citizens consider that the solution to the problems of state defence and security should be sought in a kind of European security integration, primarily, a Partnership for Peace. For the time being, it would not be realistic to expect majority popular support in Serbia for the NATO membership. However, bearing in mind the volatile nature of public opinion everywhere, it should not be ruled out that further shifts in Serbian public opinion could take place in the foreseeable future, particularly with the revival of economic cooperation with the West.

## THE PEOPLE'S TRUST IN SECURITY INSTITUTIONS

Serbia is among those states in which the public has great trust in the army. It is a long and deeply – rooted tradition ensuing from the Serbian struggle for liberation and independence in which the army has always played the most important role.

As the polls carried out by the Institute of Social Sciences, Centre for Political Research and Public opinion, in Belgrade, illustrate, the

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<sup>284</sup> Taken from: *Political profile of the civic insatisfaction*, public opinion of Serbia, summer 2001, CPA/CPS, p.25

confidence of the Serbian public in the army is relatively high. It ranges from 48 to 75 % for those with “great trust”. There is also a considerable number of respondents (11 to 28%) who chose the option “medium trust”. (Table 1)

The trends are not easily explainable. Under Milosevic’s regime, the AY was, to some degree, politicized – the leadership of the army did not hide its open support for the policy of the president and his wife. Such conduct of the AY’s top brass repulsed part of the liberal public, and probably confused the other part, so the percentages of trust are relatively low in 1999 and in the first half of 2000. Then, 5 October, 2000, came and the regime of Slobodan Milosevic was toppled, so that, at the end of October, the same year, the percentage of trust in AY rose significantly to 75. That is due, primarily, to the fact that the army did not intervene on the side of Milosevic during civil unrest on 5 October and its rating among the people showed a noticeable increase. After the establishment of the new government, there were many vacillations and hesitations with regard to the pace of the transformation of the army and of the need for personnel changes. There was strong public pressure to replace the compromised chief of the General Staff of the AY, but the ruling coalition (DOS – Democratic Opposition of Serbia) became divided on that issue. The whole process of the transformation and adjustment of the AY to the new political and security environment was halted, and that was the most probable reason for the fall in the public rating of the AY in July and August of 2001.

In a survey, carried out by the same research team (CPA-CPS) in the first week of July 2002, the percentage of respondents who trust the AY was 41%, there were 31% undecided and 28% who did not trust the Army of Yugoslavia.<sup>285</sup> The army still maintains pride of place among the governmental institutions, as does the Serbian Orthodox Church among non-governmental institutions with 56% of respondents who do trust it and 22% of those who do not do so. The researchers noted an interesting trend that NGOs, like G-17 and CeSID (Center for Free Elections and Democracy) are gaining popular support. Maybe it is a sign that the elements of civic society are slowly gaining more ground in Serbia. One more finding confirms such indications – in spite of the popularity of the AY, 69% of respondents are against its involvement in politics in the form of any military junta which would introduce “order, work and discipline” in a somewhat disorderly society.<sup>286</sup>

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<sup>285</sup> The results are comprehensively interpreted in a paper named “Prevaricating Politicians” and posted on the web at the address: [www.cpa-cps.org.yu](http://www.cpa-cps.org.yu). The paper comprises a good description of the methodology of research and the sample.

<sup>286</sup> [www.cpa-cps.org.yu](http://www.cpa-cps.org.yu)



Maybe the reasons for the great trust in the army could be found partly in a set of factors mentioned by V. Gligorov. He believes that the high esteem elicited by the army may, in some cases be explained by the “low risk of such trust, the symbolic value of said trust, and the lack of reason not to trust”<sup>287</sup>. He thinks that the high symbolic value of trust applies particularly to Serbia, because it reinforces the belief that the country has not been defeated. His second explanation is that today there is low risk of trust because there is no likelihood of a new war. But, probably, in the case of Serbia, the respect for the army evolves from the whole system of education where there is much glorification of the Serbian military past. Very often the interpretation of historic events is a mixture of pure mythology and historical fact. That creates a kind of moral halo around the notion of the army which cannot be easily overcome.

On the other hand, on account of conscription, the army is a sample of young men from all layers of society, and the officers’ corps has never become an elite, separated from ordinary people. Thus, compared to other institutions of the political system with which people became very disillusioned, the army managed to preserve a positive image in the eyes of ordinary people and thus its high moral rating.

## TRUST IN THE ARMY

Table 1

Date of poll	Trust	Medium	Small/None	Do not know	Total
September, 1999	64	21	14	*	100
Begin July, 2000	53	17	28	2	100
End August, 2000	53	20	22	5	100
End October, 2000	75	11	10	4	100
Begin July, 2001	57	22	16	5	100
End August, 2001	48	28	19	5	100

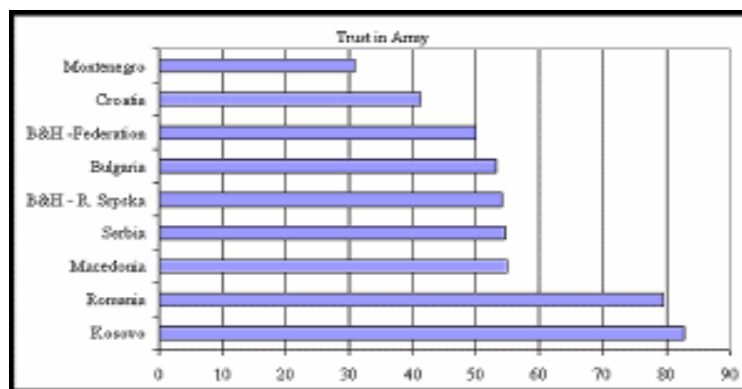
\* Included in the category “Medium”

According to the IDEA’s survey from November – December 2000, when compared with neighbouring countries, Serbia takes middle place in the chart (Graph number 1), with the percentage of respondents who trust the army between 50 and 60. The result is very close to the corresponding percentages in Bulgaria, Macedonia and R. Srpska. It is interesting that the trust in the army, the same Army of Yugoslavia, is considerably lower in Montenegro than in Serbia. This

<sup>287</sup> A Policy Brief by Dr Vladimir Gligorov, based on the data collected for the SEE Public Agenda Survey, March, 2002, International IDEA, p. 8

is caused by the existing division of Montenegrin public opinion with regard to the nature of the federal state with Serbia. All those who support independence of Montenegro (between 50 and 60% of the electorate) do not trust the Army of Yugoslavia, which is, by definition, one of the pillars of the federal state. During the rule of Milosevic, there was widespread fear in Montenegro that the Army of Yugoslavia could intervene in favour of the Federal Government and that created hostile feelings towards it.

Graph number 1



Graph 1 was published by IDEA (International Data – European Data, Euro barometer Survey Series). The survey was conducted between November 14 and December 19, 2000.

Web address: [www.data.archive.ac.uk](http://www.data.archive.ac.uk)

On the other hand, Macedonia and R. Srpska are in a similar security situation as Serbia, with many internal uncertainties, and they devote substantial attention to their armies. They feel endangered both by the supposed adverse political intentions of their neighbours and by internal ethnic suspicions and antagonisms. Their experience of international political involvement in solving the domestic problems connected with ethnic disputes are very controversial. Ordinary, less- educated people in all three entities are very prone to perceive international involvement in the solution of domestic problems as anti-domestic and motivated by the economic and political interests of foreigners.<sup>288</sup> Extremist

<sup>288</sup> In a survey in April 2001, carried out by the SMMRI (Strategic Marketing and Media Research Institute, Belgrade) for B92 Radio, on a sample of 2.171 citizens of Serbia, and published under the title “*Seeing the Truth in Serbia*”, 29,8% of respondents saw the main guiltiness for NATO intervention on the side of Milosevic’s regime. But, 29,3% of them saw the main reason for the NATO intervention in economic interests of the West, and further 25,9% of the respondents in political interests of the West. As the last two can be added, it comes out that 55,2% of citizens of Ser-

nationalist groups ignite and nurture such feelings among ordinary people, who in such simplified Manichaeic uttering, find an easy explanation for all their troubles and sufferings. Many public opinion surveys show that the Serbian population is “profoundly unready for a candid reckoning with the recent past”.<sup>289</sup> This situation is a reality and cannot be changed soon.

## PUBLIC OPINION ON SECURITY/DEFENCE REFORM

In the CCMR-ISS survey, there was one direct question asking respondents to give their opinion about the necessity of change in the defence policy of the country following the fall of the Milosevic regime. After all the negative experiences of confrontation with the whole world to the failed attempts to solve contemporary political and Serbian national problems by military force, it was well justified to ask such a question.

The absolute majority (51,4%) of Serbian public opinion deemed that the policy on the defence of the country should be changed, while only 21,3 % were opposed. The result demonstrates the willingness of the majority of the public in Serbia to support the reforms in the area of defence.

The age of the respondents has exerted a regular and noticeable influence on their responses. The older the respondents, the more prone they are to support the status quo in this respect. While 58,1% of the respondents under 30 consider that defence policy should be changed, the corresponding percentage of those older than 60 is 38,9%.

Regarding the need for further change in the Army of Yugoslavia, the respondents were asked to comment on the most favourable options. The majority of them (57,0%) believe that the army should be downsized and modernized in accordance with the capability of the society. It is not negligible that almost one third (29,8%) of respondents think that the army should be kept at its present level of strength and size. It means that much of the public of Serbia is aware of all limitations with which the country is faced and holds a realistic view concerning the prospects of the army and defence.

The age of the respondents exerts a regular and noticeable influence on their answers (Table 2). Namely, that 24,4% of the youngest respondents (18-29 years) believe that the army should keep

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bia finds the main reason for the NATO intervention in economic and political interests of the West. Obviously, the influence of the former regime's anti-western propaganda has not yet faded away.

<sup>289</sup> Policy Brief No. 2 by Dr. Mark Thompson, May 2002, IDEA, p. 7

its present strength and size as do also 38,9% of the oldest respondents (over 60). Conversely, 62.5% of the youngest and only 42.5% of the oldest respondents believe that the army should be downsized and modernized. The differences are logical and can be explained easily; therefore the opinions of the younger generation should be borne in mind when determining the future development of the Yugoslav system of defence. The opinions of the younger generation are more compatible with contemporary trends in other European countries which lends favorable prospects for the inclusion of the FRY into European security integrations.

**The influence of the age of respondents on their answers  
about the future of the Army of Yugoslavia**

Table 2

Bearing in mind new political conditions in our country, in the region and in Europe, how should, in your opinion, the Army of Yugoslavia (AY) be developed further?	18-29 years	30-39 years	40-49 years	50-59 years	60 and more	Average
1. Keep the Army on the present level of strength and size, and modernize it in accordance with the possibilities of the society	24.4	22.9	27.3	33.3	38.9	29.7
2. Downsize the Army and modernize it in accordance with the possibilities of the society	62.5	64.9	64.0	59.4	42.5	57.1
3. Create separate republican armies under a joint command	2.0	1.6	2.4	1.4	0.2	1.4
4. Abolish the AY because the need for it has ceased	3.6	1.6	0.7	0.4	1.4	1.6
5. Something else	1.1	1.9	0.7	0.7	1.0	1.1
6. Do not know	6.4	7.2	5.1	8.7	15.9	9.1

## PUBLIC OPINION CONCERNING CONSCRIPTION AND PROFESSIONAL MILITARY SERVICE

The opinion of the public towards conscription and professional military service were examined only in the CCMR-ISS survey. The first question related to the length of compulsory military service. Prior and during the survey it was one of the topics in public discussion. As could have been expected, the majority of respondents (61,7%) pleaded for reduction of the length of compulsory military service, while 25,2% were against this. The age of the respondents exerted an influence on the results: 71,3% of the youngest, and 52,5 % of the oldest respondents voted for a reduction of the length of military service, with a noticeable trend of decline of the percentage from the younger toward the older.

It is worth noting here that the establishment reacted positively to the initiatives of the NGOs and to the attitudes of the broader public and decreased the length of compulsory military service from 12 to 9 months. The decision, taken in the form of a law, or rather, a Parliamentary amendment to the existing law, came into force at the end of 2001.

In most European states, conscription is being abolished and professional paid armies are being introduced instead. One of the questions in the survey was whether the Serbian public consider conditions to have ripened for such a change.

The results show that, with relation to the professional army, Serbian public opinion has a realistic stance. The majority of respondents (42,5%) consider that military service should be kept, and engage professional soldiers only for some specialist duties. It is indicative that more than one quarter (27,9%) of the respondents opt for complete abolishment of compulsory military service, while 20,5% of them consider that compulsory military service should be kept, because it is a Serbian tradition.

The age of respondents has exerted considerable influence on their answers to this question: while only 9,2% of the youngest respondents support keeping general military service, 33,9% of respondents older than 60 years opted for the same answer. The percentage of those who support the abolishment of compulsory military service goes down from 36,6% among the youngest to 13,9% among the oldest respondents.

It is clear that the younger generation, in considerably greater percentage than the older respondents, support abolishment of compulsory military service. There is no doubt that the trend of abolishment of compulsory military service and the introduction of professional

armies prevailing in Europe will gain more and more support in Serbian public opinion in the future. Politicians and decision makers will have to take this fact into account when shaping the future development of the army.

Of course, the previous question would have no sense unless the country had sufficient economic resources to sustain and support a professional army. The next question in the survey examined public opinion on that subject. The respondents were asked whether, now or in the near future, the citizens and the economy of the FRY could economically sustain, a professional army.

Realistically assessing the existing economic capacities of the society, the majority of respondents (49,8%) opted for the answer that, in the near future the citizens and economy of the country would not be able to sustain a professional army.

The age of the respondents did not exert any great influence on their answers. There is a moderate tendency shown by younger respondents, (26,9%) , who consider that the citizens and economy can sustain a professional army while only 17,4% of the oldest respondents consider likewise. Probably the younger respondents in answering this question, to some extent, projected their wishes for reduction or abolishment of compulsory military service.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The surveys of public opinion in Serbia, carried out by various domestic and international institutions, have given important indicators relating to the attitudes of the broadest public towards some basic questions concerning the army and defence.

In connection with the problems of the defence and security of the country and prospective development of the armed forces, the broadest public supports these opinions and resolves:

- It is necessary to change the policy of the defence of the country, because tragic experiences of past years are more than convincing;
- That policy should be changed towards a gradual inclusion into regional and European security integrations, primarily in Partnership for Peace;
- The Army of Yugoslavia should be downsized and modernized in accordance with the capacity of the society to do so, and within the context of a realistic estimate of the external and internal threats to security;
- Cut down the duration of compulsory military service, but retain conscription, with introduction of professionals for specialized duties, because the citizens and the economy still do not dispose

of sufficient material assets for full professionalization of the Army of Yugoslavia;

– According to public opinion, the ranking order of the security threats to the country would be as follows: (1) the unresolved problem of Kosovo and Metohia, (2) the unstable situation in South Serbia (Bujanovac, Presevo) and, (3) potential conflicts and instabilities in the ethnically- mixed areas of the country. The external threats to the security of the country, according to the convictions of the public, are much less dangerous than the internal ones.

In the further democratic development of the political system in Yugoslavia, the public will play an important role, both in the formulating of policy and its implementing. The strategy and the doctrine of the defence of the country are constituent parts of its general political strategy from which they emanate; therefore, the role of public opinion in their formulation should not be neglected. The public will be motivated to support and carry out only the military strategy and doctrine which, at least in general terms, correspond to the ideas of that public about the state and national interests, but also for the well-being of the individual. Therefore, in the imminent transformation of the Army of Yugoslavia, the opinions, attitudes and convictions of its citizens concerning the course of development of the system of defence should play a significant part. The entire process of defining defensive strategy and doctrine, reduction and modernization of the armed forces and the normative regulation of their position in the political system should result in the creation of democratic civilian control of the army and police in Yugoslavia. Democratic political parties, social institutions and organizations, but mainly the individual, as a member of the active public and the main bearer of the obligations and the rights in the sphere of defence, are interested in these issues. Democratic social development will, more and more, open the space for the influence of the citizen and the structures of civic society in the sphere of defining and implementing the system of defence.

One of the main findings in all surveys is that public opinion in Serbia, in spite of some inconsistencies, will not be an obstacle to the security sector reforms and to inclusion of the FRY into Partnership for Peace and regional security integrations. Politicians and political parties in the country should be much more determined in following a reformist path in the field of security and defence, and they can count on popular support.





## Public Image of Security, Defence and the Military in Europe: The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bisera Turković

Bosnia and Herzegovina today finds itself in a peculiar position. It is undergoing three distinct transitions in all segments of social organisation – a transition from war to peace, a political transition from socialism to democracy, and a market transition, from a centrally planned market to a free market. The country's transition process therefore affects all spheres of social activity and state organisations. This 'triple transition' involves not only government, political and economic structures, but also has an effect on people's belief-system, perception and practices. The overall process of transition directly affects the public perception of security as well. Defence cannot be viewed in isolation from the state-political and economic systems, since the systems are inter-connected and mutually determined.

Many participants in, and observers of, this process, tend to treat it as *sui generis*, that is, as essentially being without precedent. While certain key aspects of Bosnian transition and state building are unique, the collapse of regimes and the re-orientation of civil-military fundamentals recall earlier episodes of European military reform. Since Niccolo Machiavelli's proposals in the fifteenth century to re-organise the army of Florence, military reform has been more or less a constant feature of modern European history.<sup>290</sup>

This paper concentrates on the manner in which the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) are handling the on-going 'triple-transition' and the legacies of a four-year war that ended with the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords (DPA) in November 1995. By examining how the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (F BiH) and in Republika Srpska

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<sup>290</sup> For instance, see Michael Howard, *War in European History* (Oxford, 1976); Peter Paret, *Clausewitz and the State* (New York/Oxford, 1976); John L. Lynn, ed. *Tools of War: Instruments: Ideas and Institutions, 1400-1871* (Urbana/Chicago, 1990).

(RS),<sup>291</sup> view security, defence and the military, seven years after the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords, the paper seeks to draw out some 'lessons learned' about how historical legacies can influence contemporary civil-military relations. The Bosnian case, in this regard, commends itself to further reflection and analysis in an English-speaking world, which has focused more on the causes of the war in Bosnian and Herzegovina than on its effect and meaning for future development.

## SECURITY SYSTEM TRANSITION

While public perception of defence and security in Bosnia and Herzegovina reflects the memories and experience of the 1992-1995 war, it is also significantly affected by the profound changes taking place within the 'post-Dayton' security system. In former Yugoslavia, the system of security, military and defence was shaped by socialist ideology and underpinned by a centrally planned economy. The centrally planned economies viewed strength of the defence system as dependent largely on the number of soldiers, tanks, aeroplanes, etc. For the Western democracies on the other hand, it is the strength of economy that determines the strength of the military. The defence systems of certain countries have hence failed, not because of war, but because they were economically unsustainable. In the present State of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is still in the process of being established as a functional state, there exists a strong commitment to the development of a democratic security system of the Western type. The country thus, finds itself at a cross-roads – it has not fully abandoned the old, nor completely embraced the new system. The discrepancies between the 'socialist' security system that existed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the 'democratic' or 'western' system, to which it aspires, are many. Yet if we compare the main traits of the two systems, we could say that Bosnia and Herzegovina is well on the way to transition in the security sphere:

- The old system was directed at addressing clearly defined threats, while the new system is directed at maintaining values and capabilities as a way of maintaining State security. The former system was hence based on threats, whereas the system to which Bosnia currently aspires is based on capabilities.

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<sup>291</sup> The Dayton Peace Accords (DPA), initialled at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio on November 21, 1995 and signed in Paris on December 14, 1995, stipulate that Bosnia and Herzegovina is comprised of two Entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska. Following international arbitration on Brcko Area, the Final Award was issued on 5 March 1999 declaring the area to be a Special District not part of either Entity.

- The level of autonomy enjoyed by the military was a lot greater under the socialist system. This directly relates, in an inverse manner to the degree of civil command and democratic control over military forces.

- The previous system insisted on the independence of the military in all aspects of its operations, including education, health-care, judiciary, industry, food production, scientific programmes, holiday resorts, etc. The new system, on the other hand, is a lot more integrated into the social body of the society of which it is a part.

- During the previous system there was an emphasis on customs and norms that were in line with the law. In the new system, norms and customs are still at the stage of being formed.

While the two systems differ in many aspects, some of which have been outlined above, there are also certain similarities between them. These similarities are not ideological, nor organisational but sociological. They relate to perception and acceptance of the military.

## HISTORICAL FACTORS

Historical events in the region have left no small mark on belief systems, customs and practices. In Bosnia, as in other post war societies, there is a considerable lack of confidence, ethnic division and a need for ethnic security. The armies that have fought on behalf of the people have gained their trust, respect and, as such, are held in high esteem by the people. For reasons of security, people resort to identifying themselves with belonging to the same cultural, linguistic or ethnic backgrounds. Hence the formation of more-or-less ethnically homogenous military units during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the post-Dayton period, the military continued to enjoy a high degree of respect among the populace, yet, as circumstances change, so too does public perception and opinion.

## EXTERNAL FACTORS

Other factors have also been important in shaping the public image of security, threats and military in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Changes in the immediate external environment, that is, in the only two countries with which Bosnia borders – FRY and the Republic of Croatia, have had a significant impact on the internal security dynamics and perceptions of internal security.

With the death of Tudjman and the election defeat of HDZ, Croatian financing of the Croat component of the Army of the FBiH

(HVO) has ceased. The severed financial links have pushed the HVO towards greater, albeit hesitant, integration into the structures of the joint Army of FBiH. Croatia's participation in NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) Programme and its membership in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC)<sup>292</sup>, which links the countries of the North Atlantic Alliance and states participating in the Partnership for Peace programme, has strengthened democratic forces in the country which have been against Croatia's military involvement in neighbouring Bosnia.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) has also turned its back on the old, dictatorial regime. In September 2000, Milosevic lost power in the general elections and was subsequently forced to acknowledge the results. The change in leadership brought a wave of democratic reforms, which have not gone unnoticed in Bosnia. Support of the nationalist elements in Bosnia has been reduced. Economic stagnation and internal problems of FRY – the relationship between its federal units and the problem of Kosovo – together with the pressing domestic call for higher standards of living, have resulted in greater self-involvement, rather than involvement in neighbouring affairs.

The democratic changes in Croatia and FRY have not only had internal effects. The changes have resounded positively in the region. The states concerned established diplomatic relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as among themselves, and are working at further developing of regional ties. The successful development of these relations is a pre-condition for participation in the Euro-Atlantic integration processes – towards which all three countries aspire. The European Commission has, for example, since 1992 included in all its agreements with third countries a clause which says that respect for human rights and democracy is an 'essential element' in relations with the EU.

With the democratic changes in Zagreb and Belgrade, relations between Bosnia and Herzegovina and its neighbours have improved. The external threat to the existence of the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina has gone. The (once antagonistic) military forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina are thus left to sort out the problems and decide on their future without neighbouring intervention. This has been no easy task, as neither entity has been willing to hand over its authority to State-level security institutions.

The absence of properly functioning security institutions at State level has resulted in Bosnia's slow pace of progress vis-à-vis Euro-Atlantic integration. The current security set-up is inadequate from the perspective of State security. It is dominated by entity security institu-

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<sup>292</sup> On 25 May 2000, Croatia became a member of NATO's Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC)

tions and military forces which are based on ethnicity. In order for the State to become functional, entity institutions must be placed under an superintendent State security institution. This is an ongoing-process. It involves not only technical transfer of responsibility and people, but, more importantly, a change in the understanding of threats. This is no easy task. As the results of a survey recently conducted by the Centre for Security Studies (CSS),<sup>293</sup> and elaborated below, indicate this is a tall order, but not an un-achievable one.

## SURVEY RESULTS

A public opinion survey conducted by the CSS in May-June 2002, is illustrative of different perceptions present among the citizens of Bosnia on the issues of security threats, terrorism, international security forces and domestic security institutions. Many of these perceptions remain reinforced by war-time memories. Ethnicity, being a causal factor in different views, while age and employment status were of lesser significance.

Particular questions to which the survey sought answers were:

a) Is there concern over possible terrorist attacks? If so, has the anxiety increased as a result of the terrorist attacks on the US on 11 September 2001?

b) How much confidence do the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina have in international security institutions (NATO, SFOR, ICTY)? Does the level of confidence differ significantly, depending upon the ethnicity of the subject?

c) How much support is there for downsizing of the military in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the establishment of a Joint Command? Are there significant differences between the population of FBiH and RS with respect to this issue?

The survey results confirm that shifts in security and threat perception are changing. While there was agreement across ethnic groups to certain questions, answers to questions that involved entrusting protection of one's ethnic group to joint State institutions (question c. above), revealed that ethnicity is still a potent force.

Terrorism was not viewed as a potential threat to society in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Of those sampled 75% in FBiH and 71% in RS said that they do not think terrorist acts are likely in their environment. On the other hand, in FBiH, 10% of respondents said that they thought a threat is present, another 10% said that they thought that an act of terrorism is likely to take place, while 5% were undecided. In

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<sup>293</sup> Centre for Security Studies (CSS) is a non-government think-tank established in 2001 and concerned with analysing trends in the region and training young experts in security studies.

the RS, 19% of those sampled were of the opinion that there is a threat of terrorism, and 10% said that they thought that an act of terrorism is likely to take place.

One-third of respondents thought that Bosnia-Herzegovina may face a terrorist attack, while two-thirds did not share this opinion. The differences in the responses received from subjects in FBiH and those in RS are not statistically significant. Conversely, significant statistical differences were found in the opinion of the younger generation (18-30 years) and those of the older generation. The younger generation, as opposed to the older one, has an increased perception of threats. Among the younger generation the terrorist attacks of 11 September have increased awareness and anxiety, this has led to a greater degree of discussion and criticism of the phenomena of terrorism.

The focus group interviews confirmed the results of the survey. All focus groups evaluated that Bosnia-Herzegovina does not face a threat from foreign terrorism. On a more global level, the majority was critical of the anti-terrorist activities in Afghanistan and the Near East, and directly condemned the 'aggressive behaviour of the US'. The focus group interviews pointed to the fear of internal terrorism, particularly as it concerned a potential for terrorism towards returnees. Furthermore, some respondents felt that they may be in jeopardy due to the large presence of foreign nationals who may be targets of foreign terrorism.

Not one group showed empathy for the consequences of the September 11 terrorist attacks. During group interviews and discussions, the respondents pointed-out recent history when, according to them, no international action was taken to stop the terrorist attacks on Sarajevo or to prevent the massacre in Srebrenica.

It is interesting that the CSS survey respondents did not feel that any entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina was being threatened by the other entity. This is in stark contrast to an earlier survey, conducted in 2001,<sup>294</sup> which found that the citizens of FBiH felt that the greatest threat was presented by Serbia (23%), followed by the RS (19%) and then Russia (12%). The same survey also found that in RS the respondents felt that the highest threat was presented by the US (51%), followed by the FBiH (37%), Turkey (36%), and Croatia (34%).

However, in the 2002 survey, the respondents in FBiH indicated that most feared poverty, unemployment and crime. The respondents in RS shared some of these concerns, but had a different sequence. In the first place, they are concerned by the unfavourable political situation, then by poverty and unemployment. Clearly, for a large part of the population poverty is of high concern.

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<sup>294</sup> Survey conducted by Puls in 2001. See Sead Slatina, "(Ne)-raspoloženje javnog mijenja: Od čega strahuju ljudi u BiH", *Slobodna Bosna*, No. 288, 23.05.2002

## SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

Across the political spectrum, there is an agreement on working towards membership for PfP, NATO and EU, as a long term goal of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but it can only come about upon achieving a high degree of development in the country. Membership should be a consequence of Bosnia's development, and not an attempt to find solutions to existing problems. For the time being, the economy is not functioning in a way that would create conditions for the significant further development of the country. On the other hand, unless the country is militarily stable and secure foreign-investors will be hesitant to invest in the country and hence the economy will be weakened.

As Edgar Buckley, NATO's Deputy Secretary-General pointed out, for Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, 'apart from the immediate security benefits of cooperation, Partnership for Peace will be a first step towards a more general reintegration of these countries into Euro Atlantic structures which will eventually also bring substantial political and economic benefits.' One should note though, that such a change cannot come about by means of the imposition of solutions. Such political and military progress can only be achieved if representatives of all the ethnic communities realise that through it they will achieve many of their other national and individual goals.

Indeed, some reforms have started. The reduction of military potential is a significant area of reform already commenced. A recent policy of the State Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina also calls for the development of armed forces that would enjoy the trust of all citizens independently of their ethnic origin<sup>295</sup>. It envisages the creation of a small and effective armed force, intended to uphold and maintain peace; to support civilian authorities in cases of emergency, and be capable of participating in peace-keeping missions across the world.

Introducing and implementing change will not be an easy task and will need to take place gradually. The presence of war-time memories and values from the former state still prevail among the population, whilst the values of the new system still remain largely undefined. These factors influence the formation of the attitudes and opinions of the general public on many issues, including security sector reform.

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<sup>295</sup> See Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, *Platforma za posjetu članova predsjedništva BiH NATO-u*, Sarajevo, March 13, 2000

## THE PERCEPTION OF NATO AND EU

Public opinion in Bosnia and Herzegovina strongly favours European Union (EU) and NATO integration. The 2002 CSS survey of Bosnian public opinion showed overwhelming support for Bosnia's accession to the EU. Of the respondents questioned in FBiH, 89% supported the accession of Bosnia-Herzegovina to the EU, while 6,5% were undecided, and only 2,5% against accession, (while 2% were critical of such an idea, but not outrightly opposed). In the RS, support for EU integration stands at 70%, with 21% undecided and only 5% against. A reason for 5% of the population in the RS not favouring EU integration could be because of the role the EU played in supporting sanctions against the FRY. On the whole, however, there is no significant opposition to the accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the EU.

Support also exists for NATO integration, however, it differs somewhat across Bosnia and Herzegovina. Of the respondents questioned, in the FBiH, 80% favour NATO membership, a negligible number are critical of the idea but not outrightly opposed, 5% are opposed while 12,5% are undecided. Conversely, in the RS, a large and significant difference was expressed on the issue. There, 43% support Bosnia's membership of NATO, 22% are against, 6% are critical, while 29% are undecided. The lower levels of support for NATO membership among respondents in the RS, is linked to the general perception of NATO there which stems from its 1999 bombing campaign against FRY. Although support for NATO membership is lower in the RS, than in FBiH, almost every second citizen of the former nonetheless supports such a prospect. The large group of undecided respondents in the RS presents a critical factor that could determine overall support in the entity for NATO membership.

**Table 1: Attitude towards Accession to the European Union (in percentage)**

No.	Attitude	Federation BiH		Republika Srpska		Total
1	Support	178	89.0	70	70	248
2	Critical	4	2.0	4	4	8
3	Undecided	13	6.5	21	21	34
4	Against	5	2.5	5	5	10
TOTAL		200	100	100	100	300



**Table 2: Attitude towards Accession to the NATO Alliance**

No.	Attitude	Federation BiH		Republika Srpska		Total
1	Support	161	80.5	43	43	204
2	Critical	4	2.0	6	6	10
3	Undecided	25	12.5	29	29	54
4	Against	10	5.0	22	22	32
TOTAL		200	100	100	100	300

## CONFIDENCE IN SECURITY INSTITUTIONS

### NATO and SFOR

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, confidence in security institutions varies significantly depending on the institution in question. The citizens in the entity of the FBiH showed large confidence in NATO with 40% expressing that sentiment, while only 14% showed little or no confidence. The respondents were asked to gauge their confidence in NATO on a scale of 1 to 5. The average mark totalled 3,60, which is a relatively high average evaluation. SFOR also enjoys a high level of confidence. Fifty percent of those sampled said they had confidence in SFOR, while 18% expressed little or no confidence.

Bosnian citizens in the RS expressed a diametrically opposed view on the issue. Only 11% expressed a large level of confidence in NATO, and 44% expressed little or none. The average mark on the scale of 1 to 5 achieved a value of 2,34. SFOR did not receive a significantly better evaluation and totalled 2,80. In terms of confidence in SFOR, 24% of respondents expressed confidence in SFOR, while 33% have little or no confidence in it. The fact that NATO participated in the bombing of FRY is a determining factor that creates a large lack of confidence in RS. As regards SFOR, the determining factor on public opinion in the RS is the fact that the force has actively participated in activities concerning the arrest of suspected war criminals in the entity.

### International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia

The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), in contrast to the large degree of confidence which it enjoys in the Federation of BiH where the average evaluations on a scale of 1

to 5 is 3,72 enjoys little confidence among the population of RS where the average evaluations is 1,81. In the RS, only 6% of respondents sampled indicated that they have confidence in the Tribunal, while 60% expressed a great lack of confidence. It was largely expressed that the lack of confidence stems from uncertainty over the Tribunal's objectivity in work and activities. The response in the RS, in many ways, represents the presence of particular prejudices and the attitude that "the Tribunal judges only us". The wide difference of opinion on the ICTY is somewhat of a concern regarding the reintegration of Bosnia's society. The impressions in the RS of victimisation and biased ICTY operations may act as a hindrance in the Bosnian reconciliation process, particularly if the impressions become entrenched.

### **Armed Forces**

In the survey conducted by CSS, 60% of the respondents in FBiH expressed a large level of confidence in their military, and a slightly lesser number of subjects expressed the same with a total of 54% in RS. The average evaluations on a scale of 1 to 5 is relatively high, in the vicinity of 3,6 to 3,9.

As concerns understanding of the roles of the armed forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina, there is an implicit, but strong feeling that armed forces exist for the defence of territory. The feeling underpins current convictions that each entity has to have its own military force. In both entities, the attitude is reinforced by the role that was exercised by (par-)military forces during the 1992-5 war, which were later institutionalised into the respective entities' armed forces under the Dayton Accords.

### **Police Forces**

The police forces of both entities suffer from a poor image among respondents across Bosnia and Herzegovina. A general perception exists – as identified by focus group interviews, that the police in the country 'neither serve nor protect.' The first association among respondents when the police force is mentioned are 'the repressive financial penalties for traffic related offences.' There was no agreement on any thematic area where confidence in the police prevailed.

In FBiH, the basic reasons for the lack of confidence in the police were ordered according to importance as follows: unprofessional behaviour and training; not executing their job and fighting crime; the poor levels of security in Bosnia and Herzegovina; poor personnel management, and; corruption within the police. In the RS the main factors cited for the low level of confidence were a perception that the police force does not fulfil its role or fight crime; corruption within the forces, and unprofessional behaviour.

In both entities, confidence in the police force is undermined by a perception that they are inefficient and insufficiently active in exercising their responsibilities. Perceived corruption and unprofessional behaviour, on the part of the police, are other factors that undermine confidence commonly across the entities.

### **State Institutions**

Surveys conducted in 2000 and 2001 by UNDP<sup>296</sup> show that there has been a gradual increase in the levels of confidence in State institutions across Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to the Survey conducted in 2000, 46,2% of Bosniacs have confidence in the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 44,5% of Bosniacs have confidence in the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 34,81% in the Council of Ministers of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 62,6% in municipal authority, and even 33% in politicians generally. Additionally, 15,8% of Bosnian Croats have confidence in the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 11,8% in the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 15,8% in the Council of Ministers of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 38,9% in municipal authority, and 17,5% generally in politicians. The survey shows that 24,5% of Bosnian Serbs have confidence in the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 24,1% in the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 24% in the Council of Ministers of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 56,2% in municipal authority, and 30% in politicians generally.

Surveys conducted in 2001 highlight the trend in the growth of confidence, in which 45,5% of Bosniacs have trust in the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 44,5% in the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and 46,9% in the Council of Ministers of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The results showed that 19,5% of Bosnian Croats have confidence in the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 18,6% in the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 17,1% in the Council of Ministers of Bosnia-Herzegovina; while 26,5% of Bosnian Serbs have confidence in the Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 24,7% in the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and 23,6% in the Council of Ministers of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Despite the growth in confidence in State institutions, mistrust still exists. The rise in trust towards State institutions has been greatest among the Bosniac community, far more than for either the Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats.

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<sup>296</sup> See UNDP- Sarajevo, *System of Early warnings*, 2000 and 2001.

## **International Community**

Trust in international organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina varies significantly depending on respondents' ethnic background. According to the CSS survey Bosniacs have considerably more trust in international organisations in Bosnia than the Bosnian Croats or Serbs. Trust among Bosniacs in the OHR stands at 71,8%, the OSCE at 71,9%, and for the UN at 69%. Among, Bosnian Croats, trust in the OHR stands at 32,3%, in the OSCE at 33,7% and in the UN Mission at 37,9%. Among Bosnian Serbs, those figures are 36,9% for OHR, 39,3% for the OSCE, and 37,9% for the UN Mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

### **PUBLIC ATTITUDES CONCERNING SECURITY/DEFENCE REFORM**

The main focus of security sector reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina at present is centred on the need for the reduction of military potentials. The focus is largely driven by the prevailing poor economic conditions which make existing potentials unsustainable. Attention is also focused on the reorganisation of the military and the strengthening of defence structures at the State level.

In FBiH, the downsizing of the armed forces has the support of 80% of subjects, with 20% against. In the RS, downsizing is supported by 64%, with 36% of the population against in accordance with the CSS survey.

We can state that the majority of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina support downsizing. The fact should be noted that there exists, however, a lesser part of the population that is against the reduction of the military potential should not be ignored. Opposition to the downsizing of the armed forces that does exist reflects largely the fear which exists among segments of the population of the possibility of a renewed conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Responses to the issue of the establishment of a State-level Joint Military Command showed a high level of difference. In FBiH 92,5% of respondents questioned supported the reform. In the RS, however, only 33% of respondents supported the establishment of a Joint Command, with 67% opposing it. The difference in the responses can be explained by the trauma of the recent war which still lingers, as well as, by the still present concept of an entity turning into an independent state, in seemingly greater degree, in the RS than in the FBiH. Respondents in the survey from the RS who opposed the reform in most cases supported their opinion by stating that "the wounds have yet to heal" or, that "it is still too early for that".

## RELATIONS TOWARDS VOLUNTEERS, CONSCRIPTS AND PROFESSIONALS

The ratio between professionals and conscripts in the military differs from country to country. Although in some countries, professionals may constitute the entire service, in others, up to 90% of the service may be comprised of conscripts. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the armed forces consist of a mixture of both conscripts and professionals.

Conscription in Bosnia, as in the former Yugoslavia in general, has a long tradition which still plays a role in determining attitudes today. In the former Yugoslavia, military service was a highly honourable affair. The departure of conscripts for military service was celebrated, and the parents of conscripts were proud of their sons leaving for military service. In some parts of the former Yugoslavia, young men who were evaluated as unfit for military service were largely ostracised by society. They were considered generally unfit and, incapable for life and as a result, often had difficulties establishing themselves in life in general.

In Bosnia, military service was considered particularly honourable among the Bosniac and Bosnian Serb communities. The obligations were slightly less accepted among the Bosnian Croat community.

Today, remnants of attitudes that prevailed in the former Yugoslavia affect the debate on whether to professionalize the armed forces. Additionally, fears exist that the professionalisation of the military would render ethnic communities defenceless since there would be no trained reserves for conflict. The view is largely held by hard-liners and war veterans in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Public attitude also does not favour the concept of support volunteers for peacetime military service. The attitude is largely underpinned by fears over the reliability of such a system and the risk of volunteers withdrawing from the service in case of increased hazard such as of that associated with conflict.

## SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH

The examination of the perceptions and attitudes of the citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina towards terrorism and the role of international security organisations (NATO, SFOR, comprised subjects from the FBiH and the RS. The control of the sample and the later analysis of the results were executed according to the variables of age, work experience and ethnic background. The comments and contents of the discussions from the focus groups made possible a qualitative ap-

proach to the research. The most important results of this research are:

1. The views of respondents from the FBiH and RS did not differ with any statistical significance concerning their views on any potential threat of foreign terrorism in BiH. The only fear of terrorism was that relating to the possibility of terrorist acts undertaken against refugees.

2. Anxiety about terrorism for respondents over the age of 30 did not increase after 11 September 2001. Only the younger age group of those, from 18 to 30 years, experienced a significant increase in anxiety. Data from the focus group highlighted that a majority of participants considered the United States' handling of the anti-terrorist campaign negatively.

3. Attitudes towards Bosnia's accession to EU and NATO were positive in FBiH, but somewhat negative in the RS, particularly as it related to NATO membership.

4. The citizens of the FBiH have a large level of confidence in NATO, SFOR and the ICTY, while the citizens of the entity of RS have lower levels. As regards the ICTY, respondents from the RS had significantly lower levels of confidence.

5. There is overall support for the downsizing of the military in Bosnia, with 80% of respondents from FBiH and 64% of respondents from the RS favouring such a reform. A significant difference in responses exists on an entity-basis in the levels of support for the Joint Military Command. 93% of respondents from the FBiH expressed their support for the Joint Command as compared to 33% of respondents from the RS.

The findings of the surveys undertaken highlight that, on many issues, there exist points of view on specific issues in the RS and FBiH, regardless of respondents' ethnicity. They show that a potential exists for public opinion in Bosnia to become a guiding force for the country's parliaments. In particular, it shows that parliaments can broaden the scope of debate on issues such as military downsizing due to the existence of a greater degree of support for such reforms than that perceived to date.

By comparing the results of various surveys taken over different time periods, a gradual change of public attitudes in Bosnia and Herzegovina can be ascertained. This is especially evident with regard to the issue of confidence in State institutions. Data shows that confidence in the institutions grew over the previous two years. The changes are not large, but they are sufficient enough to highlight a trend. The fact that the trend is common across the country's ethnic communities signifies that inter-ethnic apprehension is subsiding. Although the trend is encouraging, the lack of general confidence in government and security institutions highlights the need for more intense work to be undertaken on addressing underlying issues. The re-

search undertaken also shows that in general there is support among the public at large for security sector reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Differences do emerge, however, on how the reforms should proceed and what they should constitute.

## CONCLUSION

The traditional view of the security forces in this region, tells us that they are an indispensable part of the national and social life. In this context, they have an important role to play in times of war and peace, in international relations, in the provision of territorial protection and so on. Although specific positive changes have taken place in public opinion across Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are areas of concern. They include the expressed lack of confidence towards the institutions of the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the diametrically opposing viewpoints on the issue of Bosnia's membership of NATO and opposing opinions concerning the formation of a Bosnia and Herzegovina Joint Military Command. Both NATO and the UN, symbolise the highest forms of political, security and economic organisation, and, as such, they are a model and a goal towards which Bosnia and Herzegovina should strive. Common opinion among the leaders of the country is that Bosnia's membership in those organisations would be a sign of clear advancement and a solution to a large number of problems faced by Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Overcoming the divisions relating to the establishment of a Bosnia and Herzegovina Joint Military Command will be important. A Joint Command will be critical if Bosnia is to entertain any hopes of gaining NATO or PfP membership. The military forces under the joint military command are currently a subject of disagreement, but they could also be an instrument for solving many of the questions left open by the peace-process, and they could become an instrument of strengthening state functioning. For example, the positive effect of engaging the military forces in non-combat tasks and operations would help increase the trust in state institutions and assist in overcoming some of the existing divisions that exist between the entities.

The events of September 11, 2001 in the United States showed, all too clearly, the diversity and complexity of threats with which states may be confronted. It will be essential that Bosnia and Herzegovina internalises the lessons of that tragic event and proceeds with more intense security-sector reforms. Public opinion in Bosnia and Herzegovina provides scope for particular reforms to be undertaken in a more prepared and advanced manner. In other areas, where less scope is permitted by public opinion, continued effort will be required to explain the needs and benefits of implementing serious reforms.

Although that may be a demanding task, the progress witnessed in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the signing of the Dayton Agreement, testifies to dramatic results that can be achieved when such an endeavour is made.

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# **A Public Image of Security, Defence and the Military in Macedonia: In a Broken Mirror**

**Biljana Vankovska**

## **ON SECURITY PERCEPTIONS AND VIRTUAL REALITY IN MACEDONIA**

In the globalised world, and especially the world that is heading towards tighter integration, many concepts seem to be unanimously agreed and welcomed. Simplicity makes things look understandable and policy choices easier to make. Newly independent states especially find it more convenient to accept ready-made concepts and ideas about their own national needs. The reason is twofold – they lack previous experience in statehood and policy-making and have no tradition of communicating with their own strategic community, civil society and citizens. In the absence of strategic policy about the country's future development, these governments use a 'shortcut' believing that uniformity is the accepted norm in the integrated world. Thus, it happens that in their efforts to become fully integrated parts of the so-called international community, they try to create security policy that would comply with the expectations of the others rather than to try to become involved in interactive dialogue and policy-making with their own societies.

Finally, it appears that the political establishments and citizens live in two separate worlds, each part preoccupied with its own perceptions of security. Contrary to the rather euphoric political claims about the country's readiness to join NATO, the public (citizens) is caught up in the vicious circle of insecurity that originates mainly in social and economic spheres. The Existing gap between the political elite and military leadership, on one hand, and the public, on the other, is supposed to be bridged by means of the active role of NGOs, media, research institutions, etc. An ideal picture would be that democracy, and even democratisation, be about alternatives, dialogue between the leaders and the led and about allowing the citizens' voice to be heard in the decision-making process.

Reality is far more complex than any concept. The elite are not homogenous nor even harmonious subjects; the same applies, cacophony of voices and interests, policy should be based on rationality. Moreover successful and efficient security policy should be created from a balanced estimate of the security threats and the country's capabilities and resources, which would result in appropriate responses. Again, it is just an ideal case that does not often occur in reality, or, at least, not in frustrated societies where the elite are corrupted and the public manipulated and sometimes even traumatised and belligerent. Despite its specific defining features Macedonia is a very illustrative case in this respect.

The Macedonian state was born out of the second Yugoslavia's death. As one of the former constituent federal units, however, Macedonia did not contribute to Yugoslavia's bloody dissolution, at least, directly. On the contrary, it looked like a lucky child. Not having been involved in the core conflicts and having been too militarily helpless, the Republic was spared the horrors of the bloody civil war on account of which the others suffered. The political leadership and the citizens, however, faced huge difficulties for which the republic had not been prepared. The challenges have been simultaneous in many respects. In addition to the conflict avoidance, the state had to emancipate itself from the former federation in economic, political and security terms. Democracy and even statehood were something with no tradition in the society, while in economic terms nobody really believed the newly born entity was viable. The tasks were numerous, but of different importance and, often, they appeared in a strange sequence. For example, the conflict spilled over and escalated into a violent one as late as spring 2001.

The newly independent state had never had any experience of security policy-making, threat assessment, and defence and military expansion. To make matters worse, there was no time for lessons in security policy-making, while the defence system and military were seen as an indispensable part of the state and nation-building agendas. Instead of security policy-making, so far all Macedonian governments have been practising securitisation. Namely, security has been merely 'speech act'<sup>297</sup> and the political elite have been the major securitising agent i.e. the ones who would define what security is, what the security threats are and how to deal with them. In other words, the elite have been flirting with security assessments in accordance with

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<sup>297</sup> Ole Weaver's understanding of security as a speech act (i.e. "a problem is a security problem when it is defined so by the power holders) implies that by identifying something as a security problem, the power holders claim special rights. See more: Ole Weaver, 'Securitization and Desecuritization'. In: Ronny D. Lipschutz (ed.), *On Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

the current domestic and international demands. The public has usually been quiet or not even consulted about the major issues concerning the country's foreign and security policy. The communist legacy and the shadow of the YU wars did not allow citizens to be more active. On the contrary, the citizens believe that the political elite are the only ones who should define security and provide for it. Using state and party-controlled media, the ruling and opposition parties could easily manipulate and influence public opinion, which in general terms usually reached two extremes of the axis. Macedonia was seen either as 'an oasis of peace' or as a 'tinder-box', the first attribute always applied by the ruling parties and the latter by the opposition ones. In a regional context, the dilemma read – Macedonia as a 'factor of peace and stability' or an 'apple of discord in the Balkans'. The public, usually unable to reach their own opinion, are forced to live with conflicting and even schizophrenic perceptions of their own country.

The nexus security-defence- military is not an easy problem to explore from the point of view of its public image in Macedonia. It is determined primarily by the understanding of its focal point i.e. security. However, security discourse is almost non-existent or even worse – the elite and public are not necessarily concerned with same aspects of security. A debate is replaced with groundless optimism and/or a constant fear of real and imagined threats.

The Macedonian elite hold a very traditional approach towards 'national security', which means, basically, the security of the state (and of those in power). At least rhetorically, national security and NATO membership had been given priority and have constantly overshadowed the other aspects of (public) security. On the contrary, with the aggravation of the crisis, the citizens, regardless the ethnic origin, have become more aware and concerned with the human and economic aspects of security. However, the domestic and international public have always shared at least one common concern – i.e. inter-ethnic tensions. Again, the perceptions and assessments differed largely shifting from seeing Macedonia as the 'last best hope' for multiethnic democracy in the Balkans and dire predictions of the last Act of the Yugoslav drama. In sum, different securitising agents (i.e. the government, political parties, ethnic leaders, and the international community) have been giving attention to different aspects of security. In general, one can say that all sectors of security (military, economic, political, social and environmental) were in the focus of political and public dialogue – but what was always lacking was the combining of the pieces of the puzzles into one complete picture, which would result in a theory and strategy of national security. The puzzles could not make sense of their interdependence and the likelihood of spilling over of insecurity from one sector into another. Moreover, the

securitising agents were occasionally removing some threats from the agenda and emphasising others – with no tangible reasons for the changes.

The Macedonian defence system has been built in a rather peculiar political and social atmosphere. Unlike the other Yugoslav republic, Macedonia had not taken any military preparations for the eventual independence. The only experience in defence policy and practice had been the one gained within the federal system. However, any experience and expertise could not help much in a situation where the country was thoroughly ‘demilitarised’ thanks to the YPA’s withdrawal together with the armament and military equipment in early 1992. The government tried categorically to consolidate all resources and to secure, at least, the border posts.

Soon, in late 1992, upon the request of President Gligorov, a UN troop was deployed in the Organisation’s first preventive peacekeeping mission ever. The public welcomed UNPROFOR (later re-named UNPREDEP) but also failed to perceive the real mandate of the mission. For the public of the young and powerless state the UN mission was a clear sign of international recognition (at least, *de facto*). Furthermore, it increased the feeling of (military) security. The misperception centred on the belief that UNPROFOR/UNPREDEP would militarily protect the country in case of aggression.<sup>298</sup>

Undeniably defence establishment has always been seen as a core element of military security. Actually it has always been perceived in very narrow terms, and it was taken merely as a synonym for the armed forces, and vice versa. The primary mission of the defence system was, however, political. It was supposed to be the ultimate proof of the completed Macedonian state in accordance with the belief that there is no state without an established military component. The Macedonian case was a little different from the other ones on the territory of the former Yugoslavia exactly because the process took place the other way round. While almost all the others started state-building with the new defence forces already established, in Macedonia the defence system was created months after the referendum for independence and constitutional organisation. Having been built from scratch, defence could not respond effectively to any possible external threat. However, the defence system was allotted a bizarre ‘external function’ i.e. bringing the country into the Euro-Atlantic structures. In both internal and external terms, political significance of defence prevailed. Thus, in the Macedonian virtual reality it was unimportant to evaluate the real parameters of its

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<sup>298</sup> Biljana Vankovska, ‘UNPREDEP in Macedonia: Diplomacy-Security Nexus in the Balkans’, *Romanian Journal of International Affairs IV*, (1998): 2.

defence capability. Merely cosmetic, changes and reforms had been undertaken with the sole purpose of showing alleged democratic transformation and modernisation. Fortunately, despite all the regional circumstances, the country had been relatively safe from external threats and the defence capability could have been 'measured' to some assumed criteria. The first test came only in 2001, unluckily in the context of a crisis with elements of a faked conflict, spilling over from outside, and the exacerbation of potential the internal conflict .

Public perception of the Army of the Republic of Macedonia (ARM) did not differ much from the general perception of the defence. For almost a decade ARM had lacked what many other armies in the region had gained i.e. an heroic image and a mythology of war. Furthermore, due to fragile state traditions the Army also inherited a weak historical background. It was known as an army of the 'oasis of peace' and, except for the symbolical reasons ARM never received particular public attention. It was seen as an ornament of the state and rarely as an active institution. The government had not been particularly interested in the Army's everyday problems and disregarded many of the justified demands coming from the military corps, such as lack of armament and necessary equipment, the social position of the military officers and contracted soldiers, recruitment problems, etc. For more than six years the Army had been functioning without a legal framework for its internal affairs, and the Law on Service in the Army was adopted as late as mid 2002. For several years, all institutions (including the military) had been turning a blind eye to the fact that Albanian conscripts were refusing military service without legal consequence. The calls of a group of Jehovahs Witnesses for the introduction of civil service on the ground of conscious objection were simply ignored. For years it has been a publicly known 'secret' that only 30 % of conscripts called up for mobilisation, came from rural areas.

The outbreak of violent conflict in 2001 put to test all segments of the Macedonian security sector. In mid 2002 again perceptions differ again – some speak about amazing success and even victory. The Macedonian paradox of gross misperception of the crucial issues of security, defence and the military as the logical outcome of a 'virtual reality' in which this country has been living for a decade.

#### PUBLIC ATTITUDES AND POLICY-MAKING IN A DIVIDED SOCIETY: DOES PUBLIC OPINION COUNT?

The Public image of security, defence and the military is a suspiciously under-explored issue in Macedonia. In a country where security perceptions matter more than real threat assessments, there

have rarely been systematic public opinion surveys and even fewer attempts to draw conclusions from the public's opinion on these issues. More than ten years since gaining independence it is a mission impossible to find any systematic records and analyses on public opinion, related particularly to security and defence issues. Paradoxically enough, in former Yugoslavia such surveys used to be conducted upon the request of the state or party institutions. The results and, especially the conclusions which the surveys drew, could be seen as questionable and not thoroughly unbiased. Nevertheless, the research institutions had developed methodology and experience. Furthermore, the results were publicly available.

The period of so-called transition towards democracy brought a new practice. Because of the deep economic crisis, or for other reasons, the state institutions are not interested in financing surveys of public opinion. The research institutions and non-governmental centres for strategic studies have to work according to market principles and try to survive by conducting surveys for anybody who is financially solvent. In the last several years, the only sponsors were foreign institutes and institutions.<sup>299</sup> They would use local experts but on the basis of a confidentiality agreement, which means that the results will be revealed only to the sponsor and will be made public only with the sponsors' permission. Actually, what happens is that foreign (governmental or non-governmental) institutions or political parties have an interest in public opinion on various issues in Macedonia. The results are being used in the context of their development programs and help these institutions build their strategies and policies towards the respective country and region. For example, IRI complies with the agreement made with their US sponsor, while it expects the same agreement to be respected by the Macedonian partner. Thus, there is no public supervision in the way in which the survey is conducted and, more importantly no guarantee if, when and what results will be made public – and to which public.

Several NGOs and independent centres, and even some information agencies, conduct public opinion polls for their own purposes. The methodology used is beyond any public supervision, while the focus of the survey relates to the institutions' businesses. Occasionally, in the questionnaires, there would be questions related to the public opinion on security institutions or international community (mostly USA/NATO/EU), but there have not been any

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<sup>299</sup> Recently, two US institutions have been present in Macedonia (IRI and NDI). The author tried to get access to the results conducted on their behalf through the local institutional partner (Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research in Skopje) as well as by addressing representatives of the US institutions. However, the parties complied to the confidentiality agreement and the author could not get any relevant information.

conceptualised surveys on the public attitude towards defence reforms, NATO membership etc. The security aspects have, however, been dominant – but without a clear concept of security in the background, the results and analyses could not be reliable and consistent.

It appears that in ‘virtual Macedonia’ public opinion surveys are non-existent or inconsistent, irregular and unreliable. Often they are kept as ‘military secrets’, while the public are expected to believe what the media or the officials report. Not having their own reliable sources, the Macedonian government uses available foreign surveys. For example, trying to convince the foreign allies on Macedonia’s commitment to NATO the Ambassador to the USA referred to an IRI survey.<sup>300</sup> Also, in a public speech, the President of the Republic operated with a fantastic figure of 80 % public support for NATO membership.<sup>301</sup>

All these details can be taken as a very important empirical fact that speaks by itself about the handling of the security-related issues in the governmental and research institutions, and even more about the significance of the Macedonian public in the policy-making process. Security and defence ‘reforms’ have always been decided in closed circles, and security priorities and choices made without any prior public debate. The reform programmes and endeavours have been done with much more concerns about the outside factors and their impressions. In short, the government has never been too troubled with public opinion except for the election purposes and during election periods. On the other hand, the public has been poorly informed and educated in security matters. An Highly securitised public debate did not pay much attention to security policy choices. Securitisation has not been about elimination of sources of insecurity – it was always concerned with the political (and inter-ethnic) power-games. Having been ethnically divided, Macedonian society could

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<sup>300</sup> Nikola Dimitrov, Ambassador of Macedonia to the US, while lobbying for Macedonia’s entry into NATO referred to IRI’s results which allegedly showed that the citizens consider NATO membership the third most important issue for Macedonia (along with peace and the fight against corruption). See: Testimony for the Subcommittee on Europe of the Committee on International Relations, (US House of Representatives), May 1, 2002 ([www.expandnato.org/dimotrovnato.html](http://www.expandnato.org/dimotrovnato.html)).

<sup>301</sup> Quoted from: Irina Gelevska, ‘Trajkovski: Macedonia Must Become a NATO member’,

([http://www.realitymacedonia.org.mk/web/news\\_page.asp?nid=1933](http://www.realitymacedonia.org.mk/web/news_page.asp?nid=1933)). The author contacted the Office of the President (i.e. National Security Adviser and his assistants) with a request for results from any public opinion surveys concerning the security issues and public support for NATO. Surprisingly, there was no documentation and data available and the author was advised to get in touch with the IRI office in Skopje.

hardly come to multi-national consensus on security arrangements and development strategy.

The best illustration in this context is the issue of NATO membership. In contrast to apparently existing public consensus on Macedonia's aspiration to join NATO there have been very few serious public debates and public opinion surveys on any security policy issue. It would not be too harsh to say that there has always been all-party consensus, but not necessarily public consensus. Public support for a NATO security option (i.e. membership) is being taken for granted. However, since the very beginning there has been not any public debate about any other security alternative, and the NATO idea has risen into a kind of dogma. Having been heavily dependent on foreign support and thus bridging the gaps in their domestic legitimacy, the political elite have never dared pay any attention to somewhat discontented voices coming from the society. There have been several public opinion polls on public support for NATO membership, but the results have always been so embarrassing that the state institutions preferred to keep them unpublished.<sup>302</sup> Public distress was highest during the 1999 NATO military intervention in neighbouring Yugoslavia. It is believed that around 80 % of the ethnic Macedonians had a very negative attitude towards NATO (and the rest of the so-called 'international community'). That was the deepest rift in the social tissue – Macedonians and Albanians took opposing stands about the intervention itself and USA/NATO. Bizarrely enough, instead of being an issue that would bring the divided society together, at least, regarding the country's security arrangement, NATO was a point of confrontation. During the 2001 crisis and its aftermath, the ethnic communities were regarded in a different light in the eyes of the 'international community' which saw 'Slav-Macedonians' as mainly anti-Western and Albanians as pro-Western in orientation. From the perspective of the Macedonian citizens NATO has never been a 'matter of being in the club' or an 'identity issue'. On the contrary, it has always been everything but an abstract issue. Having been deeply involved into the conflict (mis)management on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, NATO was mainly perceived and evaluated in its role as 'third party intervention'. Any conclusion on the public attitude towards Macedonia's NATO membership should take into account this point – otherwise there will be a mistaken perception of the country's citizens, which could hardly see that NATO is more than a military (security) organisation and

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<sup>302</sup> The author conducted interviews with numerous governmental officials on this issue. Under a condition of anonymity they confirmed extremely low percentage of public support for NATO membership, especially among ethnic Macedonians. Those results were rarely presented in Brussels, and even more seldom to the domestic public.



includes a political community based on particular values. Judgement on NATO's military roles may have nothing to do with one's attitude towards Western democracy and values. It seems that for ten years Macedonian citizens have been living in their own world of (in)security perceptions and attitudes, while the government's priority was to turn a deaf ear to the opinion of own citizens and to try to please Brussels and Washington.

From a perspective of internal security, Macedonia had been a case of conflict prevention and the main focus had been on the country's inter-ethnic relations. The External players were mostly concerned with that aspect of (in)security, while for the domestic partners it was a source of endless benefits. Namely, the governmental actors could prove themselves the 'good guys' and co-operative partners, while non-governmental institutions could survive thanks to various projects with international NGOs. Thus, most of the involved actors *de facto* 'ethnified' the security debate in Macedonia, thus neglecting other important aspects that helped ethnic tensions constantly rise. The paradox was that the rather self-centred Macedonian society had been living with mixed feelings about the social 'peacefulness', thus losing from sight the real security threats in economical and social terms. External security debate stopped before it really began. NATO has become the 'alpha and omega' of security thinking. The army was supposed to be the leading institution on that path, and was, obviously, not doing its best. Ironically, the public support for ARM rapidly increased during the 2001 conflict crisis (i.e. in the context of internal crisis).

During the ten-year virtual peace in Macedonia the government never had funds for public opinion surveys, especially on security matters. Far more funds and interest had been invested by foreign and international institutions. It, however, did not help 'internationals' become better conflict managers and or come up with better policy proposals. From the perspective of the Macedonian citizen, both parties have left them living in the 'dark' i.e. non-awareness of their fellow citizens' opinions on major issues concerning their common country and mutual security. Pieces of information (which do not necessarily give the whole and true picture) would occasionally come through the media, which usually referred to foreign sources available on the Internet.

Public opinion surveys in a country like Macedonia may have three functions. They should serve as the classic tool in policy- and decision-making within a democratic framework. Public opinion polls have the capacity to make the people's voice heard. The problem appears with a cacophony of voices concerning security threat perceptions. In divided society, security perceptions differ and satisfying one's security needs may increase insecurity in another

area or social group. Even cacophonous surveys may serve as a confidence-building measure (or, at least, early warning system) in a divided society in which the major ethnic community are separated by a great divide of distrust and ignorance about each other. In any case, it will be necessary to make democracy (i.e. democratic institutions) work and heal social traumas within and between the social groups. Finally, by the very way in which they are conducted, public opinion surveys on security issues create a kind of demystification of the security sphere. It brings awareness that there are alternatives which are worth considering.

#### THE TRUTH ABOUT THE LIES AND LIES ABOUT THE TRUTH: MACEDONIA IN THE MILITARY CRISIS

Viewed through the prism of objective analysis, Macedonia's achievements in the security sector and in defence reform do not fit the standard pattern. They may seem minor but, in (what used to be) an 'oasis of peace' the measure for all political reforms was peace. Peace was comprehended in a rather loose way and mainly as negative peace (i.e. absence of war). The levels of the 'achievements' have varied and wavered between peace and conflict/war. Peace and conflict have been the main determinant of the public image of security and political institutions as well as of the role of the international security organisations.

For methodological reasons, the analysis differentiate two main periods: pre-conflict and conflict ones (or better, the period before the 2001 crisis and its aftermath). The discrepancies are striking: if, in the first period, the prestige of the international factor was quite high, while the domestic security institutions ranked very low, in the (post)conflict period the opposite is true. It is believed that in the period 1993-97 public support for NATO and UN membership was at its highest. Certainly, the former was a result of the high expectations while the support for UN was an evaluation of its mission.

Officially, Macedonia still sees no other security alternative than NATO membership. However, the citizens' attitude indicates a huge chasm along ethnic lines. NATO membership is one of the issues that illustrate how difficult and risky it is to make statistical estimations of public opinion in a deeply divided and conflict-driven society. As ethnic Macedonians are the majority and have a negative attitude towards NATO/EU, especially since the 1999 NATO intervention in Yugoslavia and the refugee crisis in Macedonia, the general opinion has been very embarrassing for the Macedonian government. On the other hand, the Albanian community in Macedonia perceives NATO

as an ally, not necessarily aware what NATO membership means in terms of a community of values and not only as military alliance. The results presented in Brussels have always been fabricated or, when possible, not presented at all.<sup>303</sup>

However, the surveys conducted during the crisis showed a clear picture of a heavily frustrated and even paranoiac society, which sees 'allies' and 'enemies' within and outside. For example, a survey conducted only among only ethnic Macedonians in June 2001 (i.e. at the peak of the crisis and of international mediation) showed that the majority of the respondents believed that the international community was taking the Albanian side in the conflict.<sup>304</sup> The attitude did not change a lot (or rather, worsened) till March 2002 when results of an international survey were released. The Swedish IDEA<sup>305</sup> project indicated the following picture in terms of the citizens' trust in the international organisations: only 26 % of respondents trusted NATO<sup>306</sup> and 35 % trusted the EU.<sup>307</sup> The public attitude towards the leading figures of these organisations corresponded accordingly (Lord Robertson was trusted by 20 % in total, but only by 8 % among ethnic Macedonians had confidence in him, while among Albanians 84 % trusted him; Solana was trusted even less, only 19 % in total, i.e. 5 % among ethnic Macedonians and 83 % among Albanians).

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<sup>303</sup> During the presentation of the Macedonian Membership Action Plan, in Brussels in March 2002, the Macedonian side was strongly criticised regarding three main issues, one of them being the NATO reputation in the country. The problem is, however, that nobody really wants to talk about this issue. In 2000, at a conference the then Government spokesman, Antonio Milososki, acknowledged the fact that NATO rating had been decreasing, however, never giving exact figures or possible reasons for this trend. Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aleksandar Dimitrov is believed to be preventing a survey of the public opinion of NATO reputation during and in the aftermath of NATO intervention in Yugoslavia. (Hristo Ivanovski, 'Frendli kantri – NATO kantri' (Friedly country – NATO country), editorial in daily *Dnevnik*, 24 March 2002:

([http://int.dnevnik.com.mk/print\\_statijad5c8.html?pBroj=1808&stID=532](http://int.dnevnik.com.mk/print_statijad5c8.html?pBroj=1808&stID=532)).

<sup>304</sup> The survey conducted by the Skopje-based Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research (project leader Dr. Emilija Simovska) showed that the Macedonians were distrustful of the international organisations in the following percentages: 57 % regarding NATO, 55 % regarding OSCE, 45 % regarding the UN and 43 % regarding the EU. (

<sup>305</sup> See International IDEA Project *SEE: New Means for Regional Analysis* (survey results), [www.idea.int/balkans](http://www.idea.int/balkans))

<sup>306</sup> Within the group of ethnic Macedonian respondents, the least trusted international institutions were ICTY (9 %), OSCE (12 %) and NATO (12 %). The picture from the Albanian perspective looks opposite; NATO is the most trusted institution (87 %), followed by OSCE (83 %) and ICTY (83 %).

<sup>307</sup> As for the EU, within the Macedonian group only 26 % have trust in it, while Albanians ranged it as the fourth most trusted institution (82 %).

The trust in the domestic political institutions had been very low for quite some time before the 2001 crisis. The UNDP Report on Early Warning (November 2000) recorded a deep distrust in the political institutions.<sup>308</sup> The only visible ‘positive’ change happened regarding the security institutions. According to the domestic survey mentioned above among ethnic Macedonians from June 2001, the Army and the police were seen as the most successful institutions in terms of crisis management (the former received 94 % support and the police 87 %). On the Contrary, the Government was trusted only by 24 % of the respondents. As many as 78 % of the respondents thought that the ARM and police were able to defend the country, and all the additional 16 % considered this “only partly”, while 3 % gave a negative answer. This is a striking result in comparison to the public trust from March/May 1996 when only 2 % believed that ARM had contributed to the preservation peace in the country.<sup>309</sup> The distrust in the political institutions deepened after the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement in August 2001. Paradoxically enough, the document that was praised as a peace accord by the international community, was, at the same time was perceived as a delegitimisation of the democratically-elected institutions.<sup>310</sup> The favourable public image of the security institutions among ethnic Macedonians was not so much due to their successful actions but rather because of the common belief that politicians (and the international community) manipulated them and prevented them from achieving ‘full victory’.

During the crisis, only 18 % of ethnic Macedonians (mostly among the employed and better-educated ones) thought that additional forms of self-defence were not needed. Of those who responded positively to that idea, 38 % thought that those organisations should include all those who want to help, while 12 % would have excluded Albanians. However, if such organisations had been created, over 70 % of the respondents would have joined them. It seems that despite the claimed trust in the defence capability of the security institutions, the Macedonians were ready to support various forms of para-military

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<sup>308</sup> The survey showed that only 48 % of the respondents trusted the President of the Republic, 32 % trusted the Government and only 29 % trusted the Parliament. (UNDP Project “Establishing a System of Early Warning in FYROM”, ([www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org)))

<sup>309</sup> Public opinion surveys conducted by the Agency for Public opinion Survey (NIP Nova Makedonija, DATA Press) in March/May 1996.

<sup>310</sup> According to a survey, 73 % of the citizens did not trust the Parliament, 65 % did not trust the President, while even 80 % of the respondents did not trust the Government. (Stojan Slaveski, ‘Konceptot za societalna bezbednosna dilema i za nacionalnata bezbednost na Republika Makedonija’ (The Concept of Societal Security Dilemma and National Security of the Republic of Macedonia), *Sovremena makedonska odbrana III*, June 2002): 5 – 129.

and reservist groups. The appearance of the Ministry of Interior's special force (i.e. "Lions" and "Tigers") soon met with distrust in both ethnic communities, although for different reasons.<sup>311</sup> The Albanians have seen them as ethnically pure Macedonian formations with an anti-Albanian mandate, while some Macedonians have feared their being a 'party police'. Interestingly, while Albanians hold an almost unanimous attitude regarding the security forces (mainly perceiving them as pro-Macedonian), perceptions of ethnic Macedonians differ.<sup>312</sup>

In a post-conflict period, quite understandably, the conflicting parties hold opposing opinions on state security structures and the guerrilla groups. A vast majority of ethnic Macedonians has confidence in the state security forces, while the opposing side is identified with terrorists and enemies. Ethnic Albanians, on the contrary, see heroes and martyrs in the former NLA (National Liberation Army) fighters. Macedonians are slightly more critical of parts of the state security structures ("Lions" and "Tigers") because of the repression they use against political opponents in the Macedonian camp. However, the fact that the hawkish Minister of the Interior, Boskovski, enjoys significant popularity among Macedonians speaks enough about the post-conflict challenges. The basic problem in Macedonia is not "do people trust security institutions, and if not – why?". The question is why do citizens in Macedonia place so much trust in the security institutions (divided along ethnic lines, certainly, and having confidence only within one's own ethnic community), while there is general lack of confidence in the civilian (political) institutions. The other dangerous consequence of last year's conflict

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<sup>311</sup> "While they have been praised for their courage – one senior politician said recently that, if they hadn't been deployed around Tetovo, the Albanians would already have reached Skopje – they have acquired something of a notorious reputation. The group is suspected of numerous infringements of the EU-brokered cease-fire, kidnappings and the intimidation of the Albanian population. "When you see these guys fight," said a Tetovo-based journalist, "you can only ask: where were they hired? In Idrizovo or Demir Hisar?" He was referring to the notorious jail at Idrizovo and the Demir Hisar Psychiatric Hospital. The "Lions" are at the centre of a troubling debate in Macedonia. No one knows if they are a new paramilitary unit, composed of ethnic Macedonians and controlled by the most nationalist Macedonian party, VMRO-DPMNE, or a "special force" under police control." (Saso Ordanovski, 'Reading Between the Lions', *IWPR BCR*, No. 278, 10 September 2001 ([www.iwpr.org](http://www.iwpr.org))).

<sup>312</sup> It is worrisome that only 37 % of the ethnic Macedonian respondents believe that the infamous "Lions" are a party police, and fewer (19 %) would describe them as a para-military formation. It seems that the fear of Macedonians is due to the "Lions" interference in political life but their role as a fighting Albanian guerrilla formation is more acceptable. (Public Opinion Survey (January 2002) conducted by the Forum – Centre for strategic surveys and documentation, unpublished material).

is that the ‘war-time heroes’ turned into politicians who expected to bring in most of the votes in the forthcoming elections. The crisis contributed towards increased awareness of the deficiencies and weaknesses of the defence system, but the support goes not necessarily in the line with the requirements of the democratisation process. The call for an improved and modern defence system mean calls for strengthening capabilities in dealing with the internal crisis. It goes without saying that in a society that has not excluded violent means from the political arena and a conflict resolution process, there are favourable conditions for a strengthened legitimacy of the armed structures at the expense of the weak political legitimacy.

As before the conflict, Macedonia still lives tangled with its own paradoxes. One of them is related to the greater (although relative) maturity of the citizens to that of the political elite. The maturity was proved mostly by the citizens’ behaviour in the ethnically mixed cities, such as Skopje, Kumanovo or Gostivar. The public opinion polls also show that, with the exception of a short divergence at the peak of the crisis, the citizens remain concerned mainly with the social and economic problems. The following table illustrates the change in perceptions of security threats:

**Table 1: Security threat perceptions in pre-conflict, during the conflict and in the post-conflict period**

Main problems	February 2001	February 2002	March 2002
1. Unemployment	75 %	58 %	70 %
2. Poverty	-	44 %	41 %
3. Political instability	33 %	56 %	22 %
4. Ethnic problems	15 %	41 %	32 %
3. Corruption	35 %	31 %	40 %

Sources: International IDEA Project *SEE: New Means for Regional Analysis* ([www.idea.int/balkans](http://www.idea.int/balkans)) and SELDI Regional Report on Corruption in SEE countries ([www.seldi.net](http://www.seldi.net))

The IDEA survey identified war as the biggest fear of the citizens (45 %) far ahead of secondly- graded poverty (12 %) and unemployment (almost 8 %). One of the most recent surveys conducted in June 2002, however, applied another methodology, which included war among the variables that present the most serious problems facing Macedonia.<sup>313</sup> However, the conclusions do not differ a lot. Macedonian citizens are still mostly concerned with unemployment (25 %), economic problems (21 %) and poverty (14 %) – or, in total,

<sup>313</sup> IRI Public Opinion Survey, June 2002, unpublished results, which unofficially circulate in media circles.

over 60 % of the respondents. The threat of war is in third place (15 %) but obviously people are more desperate about problems of everyday existence. It is interesting that inter-ethnic relations are seen as a security problem by only 2 % of the respondents. The existing deep gap of inter-ethnic distrust blurs the existence of similar attitudes and common concerns regarding many issues of importance for all citizens.

Having being caught in the vicious circle of their own society's insecurities the effects of the post-September 11<sup>th</sup> security perceptions has almost no impact on Macedonian citizens. The elite join in the international chorus for two reasons – partly, because they are expected to and partly because of the internal political use of the rhetoric that condemns terrorism and terror.

## CONCLUSION

As the experiences of developed democracies show, public opinion polls and political sensitivity and dependence on public support for the state security measures can be a dubious tool. It strengthens the links between the power-holders and the citizens, but it also has the opposite effect. It may paralyse the political decision-making process and the state leadership has to adopt inconsistent political decisions that would satisfy the demands of public opinion and the objective political and security demands. An author rightly stresses that democratic regimes depend on widespread popular support. Thus defence policy must not only satisfy the national interests, but it must also be acceptable to the public.<sup>314</sup> The best example of this pat-situation could be seen in the US during the 1999 military campaign in Yugoslavia. Nowadays, some critics emphasise the danger of misuse of so-called 'quickie-surveys' i.e. simplistic polling that reduce everything to an easy sound bite. In such cases, as polls results come in, the news media report immediately and the public start debating within the given (black and white) frameworks. An analyst rightly argues that "such a public opinion poll, when reported, has a funny way of producing its own contagious momentum".<sup>315</sup> Public opinion is not important *per se* – it usually mirrors deeper social problems, historical traumas and/or the value

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<sup>314</sup> Henryk Kierzkowski, 'Economic Costs of NATO Enlargement: Central European Perspective'. In: *Central-Eastern Europe and Euro-Atlantic Security* (Ljubljana: University of Ljubljana, 1997).

<sup>315</sup> Richard C. Harwood, 'Stop Polling. Start Thinking. War policy should not be set by opinion polls', *mscbc.com*, September 15, 2001: ([www.theharwoodgroup.com/newpatriotism/msnbc\\_polling.html](http://www.theharwoodgroup.com/newpatriotism/msnbc_polling.html))

system.<sup>316</sup> In conflict situations the results logically reflect the people's visceral response to traumas. Societies, equally in the developed West or in the grey Balkans, do not differ a lot in this respect. Accepting the demands and cries from a traumatised society may endanger the democratic nature of the decision-making process.

However, as the Macedonian case clearly shows, not having a feel for the voices coming from society, and even manipulating them, is the other extreme. The polling is important for the society to hear itself. Because of the lack of trust in the political institutions, it is likely that security may become privatised and new 'securitising' agents appear and speak on behalf of a section of society.

When untrustworthy institutions and politicians evaluate security threats there is suspicion on the side of the public, regardless of the fact whether or not the politicians speak the truth. A Worse mistake is made when the public listens to self-appointed leaders and figures. The need for a permanent, systematic and reliable public opinion polls is urgent in Macedonia. The need is not a short-term one (i.e. getting to know what is the public opinion is towards some major issues); On the contrary, a mature society needs to go beyond the surface and to know the reasons for some public views in order to find out the truth about the lies and the lies about the truth.

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<sup>316</sup> Tatiana Kostadinova, 'East European Public Support for NATO Membership: Fears and Aspirations', *Journal of Peace Research* XXXVII, (2000): 2.



# **Views of the Bulgarian Public on Security, Defence and the Military**

**Yantsislav Yanakiev<sup>317</sup>**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this article is to analyze some basic trends of public attitude towards Bulgarian security and defence policy as well as the military over recent years. It focuses on several issues that are of central and immediate interest in the public agenda and are important from the aspect of the political decision-making process in Bulgaria. The analysis is structured around the following five topics:

- ⇒ Public perceptions of risks and challenges for Bulgaria's national security;
- ⇒ Public image of the Bulgarian Armed Forces (BAF) and the military profession;
- ⇒ Public attitude towards defence reform;
- ⇒ Public perceptions of missions and tasks of the BAF;
- ⇒ Main trends in public attitudes toward the development of institutionalised security cooperation.

The article utilizes some of the results from recent public opinion polls, carried out by the Defence Advanced Research Institute (DARI) in connection with the preparation of the White Book of the Armed Forces and Defence in December 2000 and December 2001. In addition, it dwells on the data from a research project carried out in cooperation with my colleague Dr. Christo Domozetov in the framework of the former Sociological Research Centre of the Ministry of Defence (MOD) in 1998 – 2000.

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<sup>317</sup> The views expressed in this article are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Bulgarian MOD or the Advanced Defence Research Institute at the 'G .S. Rakovski' Defence & Staff College

## BACKGROUND: MAIN DEFENCE REFORM ACHIEVEMENTS

The consensus on Bulgaria's security and defence policy among the political parties, the President, the National Assembly and the Government is the basis for defence reform. This consensus is expressed in decisions made on defence reform itself, Bulgaria's accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), contribution to fighting international terrorism and enlargement of the participation in NATO-led Peace Support Operations (PSOs). In addition, the consensus is expressed in maintaining a comparatively high level of defence expenditures during the transition period. For example Bulgaria allocated 3.1 % of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to defence in 2002.

The development of a legal and doctrinal basis of reform found expression in a regular update of basic defence policy instruments such as the National Security Concept, the Defence and Armed Forces Act, the Military Doctrine, the Agenda 2004 on BAF reform and the White Book of the Armed Forces and Defence.

The existing political consensus as well as the developed legal and doctrinal basis of reform enabled achievement of substantial progress in the reorganization and restructuring of the BAF. The typical totalitarian status of 'a state within the state' has changed. The Updated Agenda 2004 sets clear quantitative parameters of the BAF, i.e. peacetime personnel strength being 45 000 and a wartime force of 100,000. The implementation of the Agenda 2004 includes a significant reduction in BAF personnel. In the period of 2000-2001, 17,500 Commissioned Officers (COs) and Non-commissioned Officers (NCOs) left the BAF. In addition, in 2002, more than 6,845 servicemen will be dismissed.<sup>318</sup>

A significant step towards establishing professional personnel was made in the context of defence reform implementation. By June 2002, the number of professional soldiers grew to 79% compared to 2001. Currently, 7,175 men and women serve as volunteer soldiers in the BAF. The process of the formation of 100 % armed forces manned on a volunteer basis will be completed by 2010.<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>318</sup> Lt. Gen. Zlatan Stoykov, *Bulgarian Defence Reform Implementation and Preparation of the Bulgarian Armed Forces for NATO Membership*, Briefing, presented at the International Workshop, Bulgarian Accession in NATO: Challenges and Prospects for Strengthening Stability in South Eastern Europe, Tryavna 28-29 June 2002, p. 5.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8

The modernization of BAF is a key task of defence reform. Some of the major achievements in this direction are the establishment of the Integrated Information and Communication System for the Mechanized Brigade and the units designated for PSOs. In addition, the Air Sovereignty Operational Centre was established and testing procedures are underway. Last but not least, the modernization of the Graf Ignatievo Air Force Base (AFB) in accord with NATO standards provides landing of all types of heavy transport aircraft.

Another key task of the defence reform is to increase the operational capabilities of the BAF in order to be able to accomplish all missions and tasks assigned. One of the priorities in this respect is training designated units and participating in NATO-led PSOs. These forces include 3 battalions, 4 companies, 3 Search and Rescue teams, and different types of ships and aircraft with a total of 1650 military personnel. The units are 100% manned with volunteer soldiers.

In respect to NATO-led PSOs in the Balkans, Bulgaria has contributed one engineer platoon and one transport platoon to the Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1998. In addition, Bulgarian contribution to the mission has increased with a guard company and staff officers for the SFOR Head Quarter (HQ) since January 2002. The Bulgarian contribution to the mission in Kosovo (KFOR) consists of one-engineer platoon and staff officers as of August 2000. The units participating in SFOR and KFOR have achieved full interoperability with NATO forces.

In addition to NATO's operations in the Balkans, Bulgaria contributes forces and assets to the international anti-terrorist coalition. The actions of the country were expressed in providing an air-space corridor during the 'Enduring Freedom' operation. In addition, a Bulgarian AFB in Bourgas was transformed to provide landing and refuel to US aircraft. Finally, Bulgaria allocated a logistical sanitary unit comprised of 32 servicemen and 10 vehicles to the International Assistance Force in Afghanistan (ISAF). Currently, the total number of Bulgarian military personnel participating in PSOs abroad, including ISAF, is 309 COs, NCOs and soldiers.<sup>320</sup>

As a Membership Action Plan (MAP) country, Bulgaria has implemented a series of Partnership Goals. Among them are the reviews of force structures; security cooperation with NATO, provision of qualified personnel for multinational command and support structures and the adoption of NATO procedures and basic training for PSO designated units.<sup>321</sup>

Last but not least, when discussing Bulgaria's achievements in regard to security and defence policy, one must emphasize the genuine

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<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15

contribution to South East Europe (SEE) security and stability by participating in regional military cooperation. Bulgaria is an active participant of both the Multinational Peace Force South East Europe (MPFSEE) and the Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group (BLACKSEEFOR). Regarding the MPFSEE, Bulgaria contributes mechanized battalion, engineer, medical and transport platoons, national logistics element staff officers and officers for South East Europe Brigade (SEEBRIG) and the Engineer Task Force. Additionally, in the period that Bulgaria was the host nation, BAF provided HQ buildings and a signal company as well as a HQ company to the multinational logistics battalion. The total number of servicemen in these units other than the ones designated for PSOs was 1116.<sup>322</sup> With respect to the BLACKSEEFOR, Bulgaria contributes combat ships and auxiliary ships depending on the scheduled tasks of the exercise during the activation.

#### PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF RISKS AND CHALLENGES FOR BULGARIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY

During the Cold War, the threat to the security of the country in the public opinion was traditionally associated with an armed invasion and violation of the territorial integrity. What is the situation now, a decade after the collapse of the Berlin Wall? How do Bulgarians today assess the risk of a military aggression against the country by its neighbours? (*Table 1*)

*Table 1*

#### Public perceptions of the risk of military aggression against Bulgaria (in %)<sup>323</sup>

Country	Yes		No		I cannot judge	
	2000 N=1191	2001 N=1089	2000 N=1191	2001 N=1089	2000 N=1191	2001 N=1089
Greece	1.6	1.9	84.6	86.7	13.8	11.7
Macedonia	3.7	4.5	81.5	82.1	14.8	13.4
Romania	1.4	1.9	85.4	87.0	13.3	11.1
Serbia	8.5	5.8	74.1	79.4	17.4	14.8
Turkey	7.8	6.6	77.3	77.3	14.9	16.1

Source: Technical report from nation-wide opinion polls, carried out by D ARI (2000-2001), available from: <[http://www.md.government.bg\\_bg/\\_sp/index.html](http://www.md.government.bg_bg/_sp/index.html)>

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17

<sup>323</sup> The question is: 'Do you expect military aggression against Bulgaria from some of the following countries?' The respondents had three categories for answer 'Yes', 'No' and 'I cannot judge'.

These figures clearly indicate that the overwhelming majority of Bulgarians do not fear a military aggression against the country. Prejudices and stereotypes against its neighbours, and particularly against Turkey and Serbia, have significantly diminished over the years. Compared to the beginning of 1999, about half of the Bulgarians no longer perceive these countries as potential enemies.<sup>324</sup> This is a very important change because during the Cold War, both countries had been perceived as a main source of a possible military threat. The shift could be explained by several factors.

First, active military cooperation in SEE that has developed over the last decade has obviously contributed to diminishing these fears of a military aggression and shifted public perceptions.

Second, in regard to the attitude towards Serbia, democratic changes in the country during the last years have also favourably influenced the Bulgarian public opinion.

Third, based on these achievements, the Bulgarian Military Doctrine has clearly claimed that 'the Republic of Bulgaria does not face any immediate military threat'.<sup>325</sup> Obviously this official statement regarding the security environment in SEE has favourably influenced the respondents' perceptions.

How does the Bulgarian public perceive the main non-military risks and challenges to national security? Analysis of data from recent polls reveals four groups of perceived security risks. The first group comprises security risks with high priority, evaluated as the most probable by the majority of respondents. Among them is criminality in the country, organized crime and drug trafficking, drug abuse by youth, social conflicts as a result of poverty and unemployment and international terrorism.

About three-fourths of Bulgarians (73 %) considered criminality the number one security risk at the end of 2001. The respondents rated organized crime in second place (69 %) as the most probable risks for Bulgaria's security. Drug trafficking and drug abuse among the youth (59%) took third place. These three most probable risks are interrelated in people's minds and in the past years, there has been a common trend in the increase of perceived insecurity. The illicit drug trafficking and drug abuse deserves particular attention because it has become a major menace to both social order and individual security in Bulgaria in the last decade. The drug threat strongly affects the well being of youth and the public health system. Black economy, organ-

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<sup>324</sup> Yantsislav Yanakiev and Christo Domozetov, 'Public Perceptions of Euro Atlantic Partnership: Security and Military Issues (The Case of Bulgaria)', <http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/98-00/yanakiev.pdf>

<sup>325</sup> Military Doctrine of the Republic of Bulgaria, Approved by the National Assembly on April 1999, & 47

ized crime, corruption and money laundering are the other aspects of this threat.

In the context of a low living standard (average salary of 250 Leva, app. EURO 125 per month and comparatively high unemployment rate of 20 % average per country),<sup>326</sup> it is understandable why 58 % of Bulgarians rate the risk of social conflicts as the most probable security challenges.

It is obvious that the terrorist attacks in the USA on September 11, 2001, have influenced the Bulgarian public opinion. There is a sharp increase of 17 points in the perceived risk to Bulgaria's security by international terrorism in the period of 2000–2001. The fact that more than half of the population (54 %) is now aware of the seriousness of this security risk is a good starting point for the Bulgarian Government to further expand the country's participation in the international coalition against terrorism.

The second group comprises perceived security risks with medium priority or those rated as most probable by one third of the respondents. This group includes such risks as the proliferation of weapons for mass destruction (WMD), environmental pollution and ecological catastrophes, as well as religious sects' activities. Traditionally, the risks related to the proliferation of WMD as well as ecological risks are not prioritized by the Bulgarians. They probably do not experience this as a direct personal threat and cannot imagine how such activities could undermine their security. The situation is different in regard to security risks related to the activities of religious sects. There were wide spread fears of the activities of religious sects in Bulgaria in the period of 1992-1995 period. People worried both about the security of their children and the future of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church. Results of recent polls show that fears of the people have considerably diminished. One probable explanation of this can be found in legislative changes in the last years and the coordinated policy of state institutions, mass media and non-governmental organizations to prevent illegal activities of various religious sects.

The third group comprises security risks of lower priority or those that less than one third of Bulgarians consider problems that could undermine Bulgaria's security. These are risks related mainly to ethnic and religious conflicts. It is important to emphasize that according to the results of opinion polls carried out in the last decade, the perceived importance of this risk is in constant decline. This result is another indicator of the successful implementation of the Bulgarian ethnic model developed after 1990. Finally, the fourth group comprises risks of very low priority, or those that less than one fifth of the population

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<sup>326</sup> National Census 2001, National Statistical Institute, available from <http://www.nsi.bg/Census/Census-i.html>, accessed on 16.07.2002

perceive as problematic in regard to Bulgaria's security. Among them are epidemics and diseases like HIV/AIDS, illegal immigration into Bulgaria from Third world countries, refugees from crisis regions or countries in the Balkans and insufficient natural resources.

In summary, comparing Bulgarian's perceptions of traditional and non-traditional risks shows that the perception of military risks has diminished considerably in favour of risks associated with human security.

### PUBLIC IMAGE OF THE BULGARIAN ARMED FORCES AND THE MILITARY PROFESSION

The Bulgarian Army, as an institution, has attracted traditionally high public support after the democratic changes in 1989. Public opinion polls showed confidence in the Army to have varied between 63 % and 70 %, and a lack of confidence, between 10 and 12 % in the first years of social transformation in Bulgaria.<sup>327</sup> This high level of confidence has been sustained to the present time. According to the percent of Bulgarians who declare confidence in the Army, at the end of 2001 (61 %), this state institution has the highest public confidence and the lowest level of declared mistrust (14 %). This high rating of the Army compared to other state institutions can be explained by several factors.

First, in the period of social transformation in Bulgaria, the Army has come to be seen by the public as a true national institution and a guarantee for the ongoing process of democratization of the country because it has remained aloof from politics.

Second, the already accomplished process of differentiation of political and professional ranks in the top echelon of the military administration and the establishment of a system of civilian control over the BAF has raised the Army's prestige as a democratic institution.

Third, the BAF have implemented new tasks such as participation in international peacekeeping and humanitarian missions under the United Nations (UN) aegis, joint exercises within NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) initiative. The Army is thus perceived as an institution helping to accelerate Bulgarian integration into Euro Atlantic defence and security structures and promoting international prestige of the country. In addition, it is unanimously acknowledged as having functions vital to the nation.

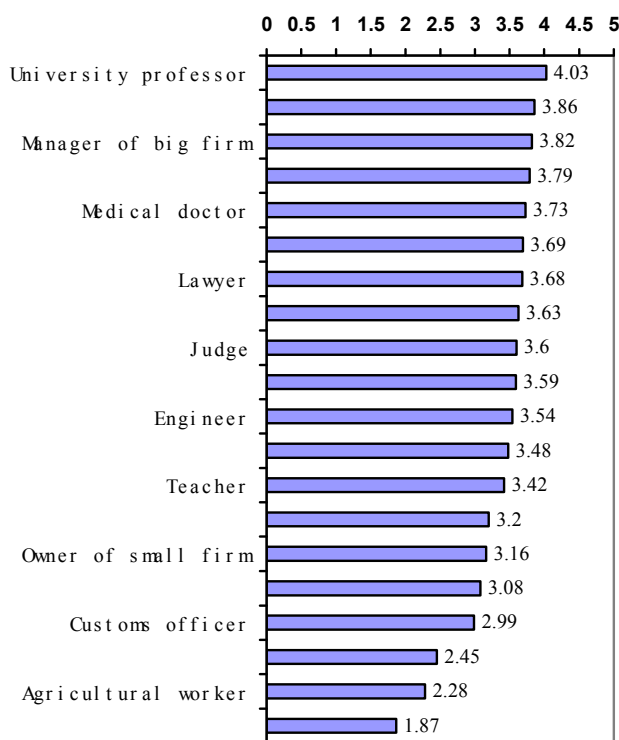
What is the public image of the professional military in the beginning of the third millennium? How do Bulgarians evaluate the military

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<sup>327</sup> Yantsislav Yanakiev, 'The Military', In: Nikolai Genov & Anna Krasteva (Eds.), *Bulgaria 1960-1995 Trends of Social Development* (Sofia: National and Global Development, 1999) pp. 292-300

profession compared to other professions and occupations in the country? The analysis of data from recent opinion polls shows that the public rates the military profession in the 'golden middle' or at 10<sup>th</sup> place out of 20 of the most common professions and occupations in Bulgaria (Fig. 1).<sup>328</sup>

*Fig. 1*  
**Public prestige of the main professions  
and occupations in Bulgaria**  
(min. = 1 - "Very low prestige", max. = 5 - "Very high  
prestige")



Source: Technical report from nation-wide opinion polls, carried out by DARI (2000-2001), available from:  
[http://www.md.government.bg\\_bg\\_/sp/index.html](http://www.md.government.bg_bg_/sp/index.html)

<sup>328</sup> The question is 'How do you evaluate the prestige of the following twenty most common professions and occupations in Bulgaria?' The respondents used for evaluation 5-point Likert type scale with the following categories: 1 - 'Very low prestige', 2 - 'Low prestige', 3 - 'Average prestige', 4 - 'High prestige' and 5 - 'Very high prestige'.



We tried to construct a typology of professions and occupations applying factor analysis on the 20 variables presented in fig. 1 to understand what were the criteria of this prestige and what were the reasons that people rated the military profession in particular in this way. The analysis showed that the criteria could be described by three factors, which together explain 83 % of the total variance.<sup>329</sup>

The first factor describes the prestige of the professions based on a financial result of the work, or as a result of income. We termed this factor '*materialistic criteria of prestige*'. The variables representing different professions/occupations, which are highly correlated with the factor, are the owner of a large firm, manager of a large firm, banker, journalist, lawyer, public prosecutor, judge, customs officer, owner of small firm, and Members of Parliament.

The second factor comprises variables/professions, which are highly rated according to their perceived importance for society. We termed this factor '*post-materialistic criteria of prestige*'. The variables/professions that are highly correlated with this factor are university professors, medical doctors, army officers, police officers and teachers.

The third factor comprises variables representing non-prestigious professions and occupations that the public evaluates both as poorly paid and less important to society. Those are professions of engineers and such occupations as qualified industrial workers, shopkeepers, agricultural workers and non-qualified industrial workers.

What is the reason that such professions like public prosecutors, judges, lawyers and customs officers are perceived by the public as prestigious based on income? By definition, the institutions in which the representatives of these professions work should be the pillars of a democratic society and their activity should be devoted to the common wealth. Therefore, one possible explanation could be the fact that the public views these professions in Bulgaria as the most corrupt and associates them with high income.<sup>330</sup> With respect to the journalist profession and positions of Members of Parliament, which also belong to the first factor, one can speculate that the public perceives them as more oriented to personal prosperity than to the common wealth.

In brief, Bulgarians perceive the military profession as devoted to the common good, which is of great value to others and important to society. At the same time, it was not rated among the most prestigious professions in Bulgaria. The reason is that the 'materialistic' rather than the 'post-materialistic criteria of prestige' leads in the rating of professions and occupations in contemporary Bulgarian society.

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<sup>329</sup> These are three components with initial Eigen values higher than 1.

<sup>330</sup> See: Corruption Indexes of Coalition 2000:  
<[http://www.online.bg/vr/crl/corr\\_ind\\_O5E.htm#4](http://www.online.bg/vr/crl/corr_ind_O5E.htm#4)>

A comparison between the public confidence in the Army, as an institution, and the prestige of the military profession shows that they do not match. This situation has been changing slowly over the last few years but discrepancy still exists. The expected invitation for Bulgaria to join NATO in the fall of 2002 and the broadening of the functions and the tasks of the BAF towards support of civil society will probably help in promoting the public image of the military officer.

### PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARDS DEFENCE REFORM

Analysis of data from recent opinion polls shows that the information that Bulgarians have on defence reform is insufficient and too general. For example more than one-third of Bulgarians (37%?) declare, 'they cannot evaluate' the defence reform positively nor negatively because of a lack of information. Because of insufficient information on defence reform, the Bulgarian public opinion is divided in between the statements: the changes are in the 'right' (14 %) and 'rather right' direction (23 %), and in the 'wrong' (9 %) and 'rather wrong' (25 %) direction. The lack of public awareness about defence reform can be explained by at least three factors:

First, there are many problems that Bulgarians consider of immediate importance, such as a high level of unemployment, poverty, crime, etc... that are of higher priority for the population.

Second, the inertia of old thinking is still predominant among certain political and military leaders, 'military issues are domains of military experts', ergo – the public has not been prepared to understand these issues. Following such a way of thinking, the elite has not made enough efforts to inform the public of the reasons that the BAF must undertake this painful reform, what the main steps are, when the reform will be accomplished and what the financial expenses are. As a result, in the opinion of the public, defence reform is generally associated with the reduction of the BAF, closure of military installations and garrisons, loss of work places and rising defence expenditures.

Third, certain representatives of mass media are still interested in 'military scandals' and not in real problems of defence reform. As a result, public debate on the essential issues is sporadic and thus, the influence of the public in regard to decision-making on security and defence policy formulation remains limited. At the same time, most Bulgarians understand the need to continue the process of transformation of the BAF and consider defence reform as 'important' (50 %) and 'rather important' (27 %). High public support of the institution of the Army most probably explains this general positive attitude towards defence reform. In any case, it is a good basis for the political and military leadership to accomplish the reform according to the Agenda 2004.

During the transformation period, the change in the recruitment pattern of the BAF is one of the issues that attracted the public attention. What are public attitudes towards the establishment of All-Volunteer Forces (AVF) in Bulgaria? The comparison of data from opinion polls from the last several years shows that Bulgarians have gradually accepted the idea of abolishment of conscription. At the end of 2001, about one third of the population (32%) fully supported forming the AVF. In addition, about one-fourth (24 %) opted for a mixed system (conscript and volunteer). The conscript system is still preferred by one third of the population (33 %). The remaining 11 % had no opinion on the issue. Compared to the beginning of the 90's, only 12 % of the respondents supported the establishment of the AVF in Bulgaria.<sup>331</sup> The gradual acceptance of the idea of forming the AVF can be explained by the common trend of abolishing conscription in Europe and the changing tasks and missions of the BAF that must be implemented by professional soldiers. On the other hand, the public is cautious about supporting the idea because it is aware that it will take years to make this change in the recruitment pattern. In addition, most people believe that this will additionally increase defence expenditures.

#### PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE MISSIONS AND TASKS OF THE BULGARIAN ARMED FORCES

Referring to the recent survey's data, the traditional function of 'protection and defence of the national territory' remains the first priority for the BAF. In spite of the widespread perception of a low war probability, the majority of Bulgarians consider military defence as very important. One probable explanation of this attitude is the long-lasting war in Yugoslavia next to the Bulgarian borders. The results of opinion polls over the last decade show high support of fulfilling so-called police tasks by the BAF. Among them are: 'the struggle against international terrorism', 'assistance in policing state borders in case of mass refugee flows' and 'the struggle against organized crime, and drug trafficking'. This result is not surprising in the context of a rapid rise of criminality in the country after 1989. On the other hand, this result could be explained by the low level of public confidence in the police and the judicial system in Bulgaria over the last few years.

The level of public support for BAF participation in the 'struggle against international terrorism' has risen significantly after the terrorist attacks against the USA on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001. This task was

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<sup>331</sup> Yantsislav Yanakiev, 'The Military', In: Nikolai Genov & Anna Krasteva (eds.), *Bulgaria 1960-1995 Trends of Social Development* (Sofia: National and Global Development, 1999) pp. 292-300

rated third out of the sixteen possible tasks of the BAF at the end of 2001, in comparison to 2000, where it was rated as eighth. Public support of BAF's participation in 'policing state borders in case of mass refugee flows, increased after the Kosovo crises in 1999. The reason for this is most likely the effective participation of the BAF in establishing the Radusha refugee camp in Macedonia in 1999. Traditionally, Bulgarians are highly supportive of 'BAF's participation in humanitarian missions' as well as providing 'military assistance in case of civil disasters' both at home and, to a lesser extent, abroad. They are rated amongst the five most approved missions of the BAF.

On the whole, Bulgarians tend to approve of participation of the military in non-combat missions like 'protection of the environment', 'ceremonial functions' and 'building up civil infrastructure'. One probable explanation is that before 1989, civilians relied on the Army to perform non-combat activities such as building civilian infrastructure.

The perception and attitude of citizens towards BAF participation in PSOs deserves special attention because public support of a political decision to send troops abroad is very important. When comparing this with the approval of other possible missions and tasks, we will find that different kinds of PSOs are rated from 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> place. The mission of 'participation in peacekeeping operations under the UN flag' is the most approved of the various PSOs. The level of approval decreases when respondents are asked to rate 'military actions under the supreme command of the UN' and 'military enforcement of the UN resolutions'.

Possible tasks of the BAF that are not supported by the public are: 'replacement of civilian workers in case of strikes' and 'internal territory control'. Both have received the last two places in the rating.

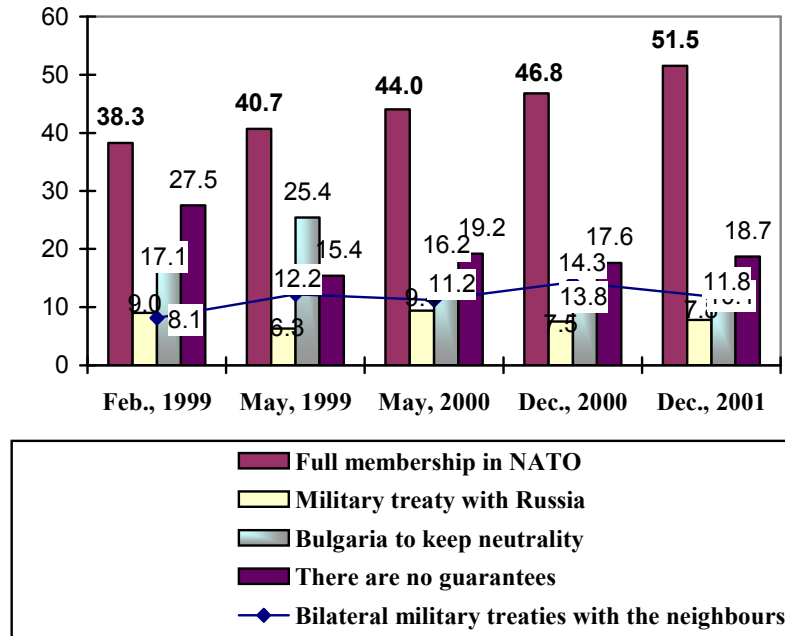
In summary, Bulgarians tend to support the traditional mission of the BAF – protection and defence of the national territory; participation of the BAF in missions associated with helping civil society and participation in international missions associated with traditional peacekeeping. Bulgarian citizens do not support missions accompanied by high risk to military personnel as well as tasks associated with the involvement of the Army in resolving internal conflicts.

#### PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF POSSIBLE FOREIGN POLITICAL GUARANTEES FOR BULGARIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY

The results of the opinion polls in regard to the country's security and defence policy clearly indicate that Bulgarians have aspirations of integrating into a collective defence system and cooperating with international security institutions. Which are the basic trends in public opinion over the recent years? (*Figure 2*)

Figure 2

**The best foreign political guarantee for the national security  
of the Republic of Bulgaria<sup>332</sup>**  
(Comparison between nation-wide opinion polls 1999-2001, in %)



Sources:

- 1) Technical report from Nation-wide opinion polls, carried out by DARI, available from: [http://www.md.government.bg\\_en/\\_sociological\\_study\\_1999\\_2001.html](http://www.md.government.bg_en/_sociological_study_1999_2001.html)
- 2) Yantsislav Yanakiev and Christo Domozetov, 'Public Perceptions of Euro Atlantic Partnership: Security and Military Issues (The Case of Bulgaria)', <http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/98-00/yanakiev.pdf>

The first tendency is related to the steady growth of the share of people who prefer Bulgaria's full membership in NATO as a guarantee of its security. From 1999 to 2001, 13.2 points expressed this growth. More than half of the Bulgarians (52 %) prefer this option. The result could be explained by the fact that a political consensus was reached on Bulgaria's membership in the Alliance. In that sense, the increasing confidence in NATO as a guarantee for Bulgaria's national security, can be explained by the role of the Alliance as a stabi-

<sup>332</sup> The respondents had the possibility to choose one possible alternative of guaranteeing the national security of the country among which were membership of Bulgaria in NATO, signing a defence union with Russia, signing bilateral treaties with our neighbouring countries and preserving neutrality.

lizing factor in the Balkans through the operations in Bosnia and Hercegovina, Kosovo and Macedonia. Last but not least, the Bulgarian public opinion was influenced by the concrete commitments that the Alliance assumed in regard to Bulgaria's security during the Kosovo crisis, as well as when the country joined the anti-terrorist coalition after the attacks against the USA on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001.

The second tendency is related to the decrease in the share of people who think that the country could not rely on foreign political guarantees for its security. Less than one fifth of Bulgarian citizens (19 %) maintain that position. Although this tendency is not so clearly expressed and fluctuations in the course of different polls are considerable, the share of these citizens has decreased by 8.8 points in comparison to February 1999. The analysis of data from surveys shows that those who are 'pessimists' are more often people with a lower educational status and who possess a more weakly expressed interest in defence and security issues: a fact that, to a certain extent, explains these fluctuations and hesitations.

The third tendency is related to the decrease in the share of those who support Bulgaria's neutrality. In December 2001, we measured the lowest support in recent years of the idea of Bulgaria declaring itself a neutral country. One tenth of Bulgarians (10%) support this idea. There is a rapid decrease in support of neutrality after a peak in the course of the war in Kosovo in May 1999.

In regard to the possibility of Bulgaria guaranteeing its security through signing bilateral treaties with neighbouring countries; an option preferred by 12 % of the Bulgarians, we are not able to speak of an outlined tendency. In any case, there has been an increase in the number of supporters of that option from February 1999 to December 2001. This can most likely be explained by active bilateral and multi-lateral military cooperation among the Balkan countries in the last few years. The smallest group (8%) are those who believe that Bulgaria can guarantee its security by signing a defence union with Russia. The fluctuations and hesitations are the least in this group and the differences in the course of the surveys are not statistically significant.

#### BULGARIAN MEMBERSHIP IN NATO – ADVANTAGES AND COMMITMENTS

Analysis of data from recent opinion polls shows that more than three-fourths of Bulgarians have a positive opinion about Bulgaria's accession to NATO. The share of people who 'fully support' the membership of the country in the Alliance is the largest (40 %). In addition, more than one third (37 %) point out that 'they would rather support' the accession of Bulgaria to NATO. Every tenth Bulgarian (9 %) declares they are 'fully against', and approximately one-seventh

of the people (14 %) point out that they are 'rather against' Bulgaria's accession to the Alliance.

In December 2001, public support of Bulgaria's membership in NATO grew by 12.1 points in comparison to May 2000 in both categories 'I fully support' and 'I would rather support'.

Bulgaria's membership in a collective defence system like NATO is related to important advantages such as guaranteeing the national security, but it is also connected to definite commitments that the country must make as a part of this system. In order to assess the extent that the public is apt to support this policy, we asked Bulgarians to point out whether they would approve of the following activities:

- ⇒ Participation of Bulgarian troops in multinational NATO forces to take part in PSOs;
- ⇒ Stationing NATO troops on Bulgarian territory;
- ⇒ Participation of Bulgarian troops in defending a NATO member country;
- ⇒ Conducting NATO exercises on Bulgarian territory;
- ⇒ Planned NATO flights over the Bulgarian territory;
- ⇒ Increasing the defence portion of the national budget.

To what extent is the Bulgarian public disposed and ready to support those commitments? What are the dynamics of the public opinion in the recent years?

The participation of Bulgarian troops in NATO multinational forces for conducting PSOs is the most highly approved indicator (52 %). Approval of this activity marked an increase of 15.9 points in the period between 1999-2001. This can be explained by many years of experience of our contingents in SFOR and KFOR, and by the excellent performance of the Bulgarian servicemen in these operations.

The increase in the share of the national budget allocated for defence also has received approval from most Bulgarian citizens (52 %). Public support has grown by 20.1 points in comparison to 1999. This result can be explained by a gradual shedding of illusions that the lack of a military threat for Bulgaria at the present time means full security and a serene existence. The prevailing approval of an increase in defence expenditures is a good prerequisite for the successful continuation of military reform and for the implementation of the MAP for Bulgarian accession to NATO.

Almost half of the Bulgarians (48 %) approve of conducting planned flights of NATO aircraft over Bulgaria. This result deserves special attention because it is one of the indicators that in the previous polls showed high disapproval. At the end of 2001, the share of people who approved of the planned flights of the NATO aircraft over Bulgaria had increased by a quarter (24.9 points). This abrupt increase of approval in comparison to 1999 illustrates a gradual shedding of the

prejudices and stereotypes of ordinary people. This could be a result of the fact that the NATO flights over Bulgaria and the employment of the Bulgarian AFB, as a part of the engagements that Bulgaria assumed as a partner of NATO, has become a practice in the last few years.

In general, at the end of 2001, we registered a considerable increase in the approval of all indicators offered for assessment (probable commitments of the country as a future NATO member) in comparison to February 1999. This could mean a gradual re-orientation of the people, that they are gradually becoming aware of the fact that Bulgaria cannot rely on guarantees for its security without accepting the commitments resulting from this membership. At the same time, with respect to such possible commitments of the country as a future NATO member like stationing NATO troops on Bulgarian territory, participation of Bulgarian troops in defending another NATO member country and conducting NATO exercises on Bulgarian territory, disapproval still prevails.

## CONCLUSION

The perceptions of Bulgarians regarding the risks and challenges for national security have significantly changed in the post-Cold War period. The majority of Bulgarian citizens today do not fear a military aggression against the country. At the same time, people are concerned about risks that affect the society's security as well as the security of the individual.

Despite the widespread perception of a low war probability, a broad consensus exists on the traditional function of the Army – protection and defence of the national territory, being the priority for the Bulgarians. At the same time, Bulgarian citizens are highly supportive of and expect the BAF to be employed in the so-called socially acceptable missions such as humanitarian operations, assistance in the case of natural and industrial disasters, environmental protection, etc. Furthermore, the people support the employment of the BAF in the war against international terrorism, in policing state borders in the case of mass refugee flow and in the struggle against organized crime and drug trafficking. The public no longer perceives these missions as pure police tasks. This shift is important and public support might be useful from the viewpoint of future force configuration, selection, training and employment of Bulgarian contingents in operations other than war. In respect to employment of the BAF in PSOs, the public is prone to support participation of Bulgarian soldiers only in traditional peacekeeping missions. Tensions can arise when deciding whether to send troops abroad, as most of the missions today are accompanied by a high risk for its personnel.



The BAF has attracted traditionally high public support after the democratic changes that took place in the country in 1989. At the same time, the military profession is not considered one of the most prestigious professions in Bulgaria. Still existing divergence between the public image of the Army as an institution and the image of the military profession deserves particular attention because in a warless society after the end of the Cold war, a crisis of the professional identity of officers could result. Obviously, the political and military leadership in Bulgaria has to look for a new public legitimacy of the military profession based on participation of the BAF in international missions as well as missions in support of civil society.

Most Bulgarians are willing to rely on integration into a collective defence system and on international military cooperation as the best ways to guarantee the national security. At the same time, despite some positive developments during the last two years, some of the possible commitments of Bulgaria as a future NATO member country are not familiar to Bulgarians. Yet, in this regard, the information policy concerning Bulgarian accession to NATO should be aimed at achieving a better understanding of the balance between the advantages and the commitments of the country as a member of a collective defence system.

The public generally supports the implementation of defence reform in Bulgaria. At the same time, Bulgarian citizens still lack information on security and defence policy. Insufficient information could create public speculations based on fears of the new and the unknown. Therefore, serious efforts must be made by political and military elites to guarantee transparency and accountability of security and defence policy of the country, and thus, to achieve stable public support based on an informed public opinion. This will help the political and military leadership pursue and sustain successful defence reform keeping in mind that the role of public support will grow under conditions of emerging trans-border security risks and the development of an information society in Bulgaria.



## Romanian Public Attitudes to Defence and Security Sector Reform

Larry L. Watts

### PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE MILITARY: THE LEGACY OF THE PAST

Public attitudes towards the Romanian Armed Forces (RAF) are conditioned by historical legacies. The mythos of the military as state-builder and national defender, deeply rooted in Romanian society, stretches back into the pre-national past where local princes raised armies against Mongol, Tartar and Ottoman invaders. The military's critical role in the unification, independence, and integration/re-integration of the nation-state during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries consolidated this perception.

Under communism, after wresting real military autonomy from Soviet subordination within the Warsaw Pact during the early 1960s, Romania was able to remove Soviet influence from the RAF and even publicly condemn the Soviet-led Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia and the crushing of the Prague Spring in 1968. This spared the RAF the loss of prestige associated with 'de-nationalisation' and popular identification as the agent of a foreign power that occurred within the Pact's other non-Soviet members, and it permitted the RAF to resume its traditional role of defender of national sovereignty against a threat from the east.

Paradoxically, just as the RAF gained the professional autonomy necessary for it to mount a credible defence against a possible Soviet incursion, it was also the target of increasing suspicion and antagonism from a Romanian Communist leadership that was compelled to rely on it for the protection of their autonomous policies vis-à-vis the USSR.<sup>333</sup> The alienation of the military from the repressive regime of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, along with its

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<sup>333</sup> See Alex Alexiev's *Party-Military Relations in Eastern Europe: The Case of Romania* (Los Angeles: Center for Strategic and International Affairs, University of California at Los Angeles, 1979), pp. 20-23, and "The Romanian Army." In: Jonathan R. Adelman (ed.) *Communist Armies in Politics* (Boulder: Westview, 1982), pp. 149-163.

exploitation a source of manual labour for his egoistic construction projects, linked the military more closely to the downtrodden society in popular perception. This perception was reinforced regularly through military participation in disaster-relief operations and seasonal harvesting, and was reconfirmed when the RAF sided with the population against the regime in the December Revolution of 1989. The RAF thus began the post-Communist transition with the benefit of enviably high levels of trust – upwards of 90% – and has consistently received the trust of three-quarters of the population ever since.<sup>334</sup>

Romania's fully independent national control over its defence strategy and operational forces had concrete consequences for the military beyond heightened public confidence.<sup>335</sup> Most importantly, it enabled the initiation of necessary 'first generation' reforms – new structures, legal frameworks, and relationships – almost immediately after the 1989 revolution, as well as an earlier opportunity to address the 'second generation' reform of investing these forms with real content and building capacities.<sup>336</sup> Despite sharing a number of common problems with other post-Communist militaries equally – for example, scarce resources, civilian expertise and control problems, oversized and inefficient structures, and obsolete equipment – the advantages conferred by fully functional independent operational capability freed the RAF to undertake new normative roles of multinational peace-support and crisis management in the Persian Gulf, Somalia, Angola, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania, Kosovo and Afghanistan even while it was developing a reputation as Romania's leading institutional reformer.

The military reform process has also had its share of setbacks. During 1998-2000, for instance, dysfunctional political differences within the ruling coalition as manifested among the civilian political authorities appointed to the ministry of defence (MoD) led to a

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<sup>334</sup> See e.g., [www.state.gov/www/background\\_notes/romania/0700\\_bgn.html](http://www.state.gov/www/background_notes/romania/0700_bgn.html).

<sup>335</sup> This ability existed because "Romania's unique military position within the Warsaw Pact ensured that the military were able to think and take decisions for themselves." *Review of Parliamentary Oversight of the Romanian Ministry of National Defense and the Democratic Control of its Armed Forces*, DMCS Study No. 43/96 (London: Directorate of Management and Consultancy Services, 1997), p. 30. See also, Robert D. Kaplan, "Europe's Fulcrum State," *Atlantic Monthly* 282, no. 3 (September 1998): 35. Compare this with the Polish situation described in Andrew A. Michta, *The Soldier-Citizen: The Politics of the Polish Army after Communism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), p. 84.

<sup>336</sup> Timothy Edmunds, *Security Sector Reform: Concepts and Implementation*, Working Paper Series no. 3, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of the Armed Forces, Geneva, March 2002, pp. 6-13.

widening gap between reform planning and real implementation.<sup>337</sup> Although publicly evident, this lag in reform did not translate into negative opinion regarding the military. On the contrary, the RAF was rightly perceived as the victim of partisan civilian politics. The election of a new administration and more coherent government in December 2000 revitalized the military reform process, earning it respect from domestic quarters and NATO's leadership alike. An important element of this reform process is constituted by the British, American and German military and civil-military advisers resident in the MoD and General Staff, who have been granted full access to planning proceedings since 2001.

Reform achievements during 2001-2002, some of which represent the fruition of efforts underway for several years, are basically of two varieties. The first variety address issues of civilian control, depoliticisation and professionalisation necessary for a healthy democratic civil-military relationship. One of the most important achievements in this regard is the implementation of a transparent and sound personnel policy and career management system, which includes a selection board process based on professional criteria and observed by NATO-member advisors. Along with this, a comprehensive personnel reconversion programme has been implemented with the assistance of the World Bank in order to make the best use of trained personnel and avoid unintended negative consequences during the downsizing process. A fully "joint" planning process was implemented, as was a robust budgeting system (PPBES), both in the MoD and down to the unit level, which now permit a degree of civilian control more comparable to that existing in the long-consolidated democracies.<sup>338</sup>

The second variety of reforms address problems of modernization and interoperability critical for joint operations within the NATO alliance. One of the most significant achievements in this domain is the continued restructuring of the armed forces, the reconfiguration of the officer rank pyramid, and the downsizing of the officer corps by over 5,000 senior ranks, including the reduction from 400 general rank positions in 2000 down to 90 general positions in 2002. In terms of overall manpower, the Romanian Armed Forces have been downsized from over 300,000 in 1989 to less than 127,000 (including 96,000

<sup>337</sup> <sup>337</sup> Larry L. Watts, "The Crisis in Romanian Civil-Military Relations," *Problems of Post-Communism* 48, no. 4 (July/August 2001): 14-26, and "Democratic Civil Control of the Military in Romania: An Assessment as of October 2001." In: Graeme P. Herd (ed.) *Civil-Military Relations in Post Cold War Europe* (Sandhurst: Conflict Studies Research Centre, December 2001), pp. 14-42

<sup>338</sup> Serban Lungu, "Joint Defence Planning." In: Larry L. Watts (ed.) *Romanian Military Reform and NATO Integration* (Iasi-Oxford-Portland: Center for Romanian Studies, 2002), pp. 107-119.

uniformed military and 31,000 civilians) in 2002, with a target of 90,000 (a 75,000-strong peacetime active service force and 15,000 civilian employees) to be reached by 2007.<sup>339</sup> NCO training has been completely reformed with the assistance of the U.S. Marine Corps and the ratio of NCOs to officers has increased from 1.0:0.8 to 1.0:1.8, with a final target of 1:3 to be reached in 2004. A new acquisition concept has been adopted, as has a new procurement strategy more attuned to the needs of a modernizing military than to the survival of obsolete domestic defence industries.<sup>340</sup> Currently, interoperable military units are serving in Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Afghanistan. Polls indicate general approval for the military reform which, coupled with traditional sources of popularity, consistently earns the military a comfortable margin of public support, averaging between 74% and 82% over the last 5 years, depending on the polling agency.<sup>341</sup>

## OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE SECURITY SECTOR

### The Intelligence Services: SRI and SIE

Although the military institution has been the central focus of security sector reforms, intelligence and law enforcement bodies also constitute important elements of the process. Unlike the military, intelligence and security services have not traditionally enjoyed high esteem in the eyes of the public. On the contrary, the employment of these institutions primarily as instruments of repression under the communist regime gained the *Securitate* the general enmity of the population.<sup>342</sup> In response to this sentiment and in order to remove a potential threat to democratisation, the provisional authorities first

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<sup>339</sup> George Cristian Maior, "Personnel Management and Reconversion." In: Watts (ed.) *Romanian Military Reform*, pp. 57-81.

<sup>340</sup> Gheorghe Matache, "The New Procurement Concept." In: Watts (ed.) *Romanian Military Reform*, pp. 135-150.

<sup>341</sup> Metro Media Transylvania (MMT) polls of November 1998, May 1999, May and October 2000, May and November 2001, and February, May and July 2002. IMAS typically scores the army higher in public trust, averaging over 80% in monthly polls since December 2000. Unless other wise noted, polling data is from MMT.

<sup>342</sup> *Securitate* is an umbrella term for the Department of State Security (DSS). The DSS frequently included both domestic and foreign intelligence functions and had all the coercive powers associated with law enforcement organs commonly used to control the Romanian population. See e.g., Dennis Deletent, *Ceausescu and the Securitate: Coercion and Dissent 1965-1989* (London: Hurst & Co., 1995).

subordinated the *Securitate* to the MoD and then explicitly dissolved it during the 1989 revolution that overthrew communism.

This proved costly in the short run. Aside from its repressive character, the *Securitate* had also been responsible for legitimate intelligence gathering. Without it or any replacement agency, the government was unable to anticipate or prevent any of the violent socio-political domestic conflicts that erupted during the first half of 1990 and often reacted inappropriately. The stability of the fledgling democratic government was made even more insecure since these internal disturbances were paralleled by destructive changes along two of Romania's borders that would soon erupt into armed conflict as the former Yugoslavia descended into war and hostilities broke out within the Republic of Moldova over the breakaway area of "Transnistria."<sup>343</sup>

Domestic and foreign intelligence bodies were thus rapidly reconstituted during the spring and summer of 1990. In order to delimit the new domestic Romanian Intelligence Service (SRI) from its *Securitate* predecessor, it was shorn of all coercive law enforcement powers – as was its foreign intelligence counterpart (SIE) – and restricted to intelligence gathering and analysis.<sup>344</sup> Unfortunately, the need for urgency and effectiveness in reconstituting those organs inevitably required an appeal to existing expertise – former *Securitate* personnel – who were then reincorporated into the new intelligence bodies.<sup>345</sup> Consistent efforts were made to restrict the presence of such personnel by speciality, retaining only critical expertise such as technical communications specialists and area experts, such that only 15% of all SRI and SIE officers had served in the former organization by 2001.<sup>346</sup> For various reasons, however, the professional longevity of some personnel and the more intractable problem of changing Cold War mentalities continues to plague the reputation of the services in public opinion.

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<sup>343</sup> Trevor Waters, *The Moldovan Syndrome and the Re-Russification of Moldova: Forward into the Past*, G105 (Camberley, UK: Conflict Studies Research Centre, February 2002), pp. 1-9.

<sup>344</sup> The SRI possesses a small anti-terrorist operational unit that foiled an assassination attempt by Sikh extremists against the Indian Ambassador to Romania in 1993. It does not engage in investigations of Romanian citizens.

<sup>345</sup> This was a generalized phenomenon throughout the region – the only exception being the East German service, which was completely disbanded since these tasks were taken over by the already existing services of West Germany. Personnel and mentality continuity is an issue common to all post-authoritarian reform. See e.g., Sandy Africa and Siyabulela Mlombile, *Transforming the Intelligence Services: Some Reflections on the South African Experience*, Project on Justice in Times of Transition, Harvard University, October 2001, pp. 1-8.

<sup>346</sup> TV Romania 1 (23 March 2002, 1800 CET), "Romania Politica" produced by Cristian Marinescu.

During the course of 2001, both the SRI and SIE developed broad reform strategies regarding internal policies and missions, public outreach programs, and civilian expertise development programs. In the case of the much larger (8,000-10,000 personnel) SRI, this strategy was submitted for prior public debate to the media and non-governmental organizations, and then modified on the basis of this feedback.<sup>347</sup> Coupled with this new approach, both organizations actively pursued cooperation with foreign counterparts, including NATO's Office of Security (NOS), the services of NATO member states, and institutions such as INTERPOL, EUROPOL. These efforts were redoubled after 11 September 2001, with the SRI becoming the lead institution responsible for the fight against terrorism, against weapons, narcotics and human trafficking, and, increasingly, with the fight against corruption.<sup>348</sup>

The SRI and SIE are subordinated to the presidency, coordinated by the president's Supreme Defence Council, and subject to oversight by special standing parliamentary committees on intelligence. Although they are not subordinated to the MoD or General Staff, they are based on a military hierarchy and, according to the constitution, constitute part of the "armed forces". In an effort to clarify this anomaly and remove ambiguity, both organizations are drawing up draft legislation for their demilitarisation, and the constitution is currently undergoing revision.<sup>349</sup>

These reforms and the more transparent cooperation with NATO and foreign services on common aims easily understood by the population have brought the SRI and SIE significant prestige benefits and a new respect.<sup>350</sup> According to a poll conducted in March 2002, 60% of the population now believes that the services have been reformed into a modern, democratic institution, while 55% of the public believe it a trustworthy institution – a remarkable balance which places them behind only the military and the church in terms of public trust.<sup>351</sup>

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<sup>347</sup> See *The Romanian Intelligence Service: Between Reality and Necessity. Fundamental Elements of a Short and Long-term Strategy* (Bucharest: Serviciul Roman de Informatii, June 2001). SIE, the foreign intelligence service, has around 800 personnel, less than one-tenth the personnel of the SRI. See [www.sie.ro](http://www.sie.ro).

<sup>348</sup> The SRI was formally charged with counter-terrorism and publicly issued its strategy to combat the phenomenon at the beginning of 2002. [www.sri.ro](http://www.sri.ro).

<sup>349</sup> Larry L. Watts, ed., *Intelligence Service Reform in Romania* (forthcoming).

<sup>350</sup> In April 2002, Romania hosted the first joint meeting of NATO and MAP (NATO candidate) services, with a second round scheduled in September. In May 2002, Romania hosted the first joint conference of all Balkan intelligence services on the topic of countering terrorism.

<sup>351</sup> IRSOP (*Institutul Roman de Sondaj Opinie Publice*), 16-20 March 2002.



The SRI and SIE have also managed to shed their reputation as a repressive institution in the service of the ruling government. 50% of the population no longer believes that the intelligence services investigate citizens because of their political convictions. Apparently, twelve years after the revolution, the majority of the population is ready to forgive officers of the former *Securitate*. 74% believe that intelligence specialists before 1989 still working in the services should be retained. Significantly, 35% believe that the services have too little power to accomplish their missions: a probable reflection of the still unstable neighbourhood in which the Romanians find themselves.

However, one-third of the population remains steadfastly suspicious of the intelligence services. 33% believe that they have not been reformed, 36% have a bad opinion of them, 35% believe that citizens are still investigated because of their political convictions, and 32% believe that the services act in the interest of the specific government in power. Interestingly, only 15% believe that the intelligence services possess too much power. This suggests that more than half of those expressing dissatisfaction with the intelligence services are critical of their missions and effectiveness but not fearful that they might exercise more repressive powers.

### **The Police**

Like the intelligence and security services, law enforcement organs (*militia*) also dissolved during the revolution because of their links with the Communist police state. In contrast to those services, however, they did so of their own accord due largely to fears of popular retribution. The provisional authorities thus sought to reconstitute a police force capable of reproducing order on a daily basis within a democratic framework as one of its first priorities.

The public perception of the police institution initially suffered because its ineffectiveness with dealing with several high-profile miners' demonstrations coupled with a persistent inability to monitor and prevent local social and ethnic tensions from erupting into violence.<sup>352</sup> While problems of effective crowd control and preventive policing have largely been redressed, the police image among the population still suffers from the stigma of corruption. A highly centralized military and bureaucratic institution, the Romanian National Police remain vulnerable to corruption charges especially at

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<sup>352</sup> See, e.g., Larry L. Watts and Deborah Wilson, *Building Romanian Democracy: The Police and Ethnic Minorities*, Princeton: Project on Ethnic Relations, 1999.

the level of central structures, and this “corruption at center” continues to undermine its reputation generally.<sup>353</sup>

At the same time, where they have been made a governmental priority, areas of reform excellence have been created. For example, the Romanian Border Guards and the Anti-Organized Crime Unit (together with the SRI and SIE) have made impressive gains in securing Romanian borders against illegal trafficking in human beings and are largely credited with the European Union’s decision to relieve Romanian citizens of the Schengen visa requirement. Likewise, the Gendarmerie militarised police, constituted in March 1990 and reorganised with French, Italian and Spanish assistance, had, by 2002, achieved a level of competence such that NATO requested their deployment for peacekeeping operations in Kosovo.<sup>354</sup>

Two reform goals designed to increase accountability and effectiveness, police demilitarisation and decentralisation, did not move much past the discussion stage before 2001. The necessary legislation for demilitarisation was finally adopted at the end of 2001. The law has since been promulgated and its implementation began in August 2002. Decentralization is currently the subject of active debate both within the police and ministry of interior and among civic organizations. Although it is in both the government programme and the program of the police general inspectorate, it still has to overcome significant resistance at the level of central structures and from some government officials.

The overall performance of the internal security apparatus (intelligence and law enforcement bodies) improved measurably after the elections of December 2000. One notional indicator of this improvement is the trend in drug seizures. Narcotics trafficking is a threat not only to the national security of Romania but, given its status as part of the main northern Balkan route for trafficking, also to Romania’s European and Euro-Atlantic neighbours and allies.<sup>355</sup> As such, along with weapons proliferation and trafficking in human beings, it has been maintained as a priority concern of Romanian authorities. During the 1992-1996 Iliescu administration drug captures steadily increased each year, reaching a total of 5.7 tons in 1996. They

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<sup>353</sup> This general problem was noted by Gabriel Badescu, “Corruption: A Cause for the Lack of Trust in Institutions” in the MMT *Barometrul De Opinie Publice* 18-27 May 2001, done for the Open Society Foundation.

<sup>354</sup> 115 Romanian Gendarmes deployed in Kosovo in the spring of 2002. Ovidiu Dranga, editor, *Romania: A Contributor to Regional Security and Stability* (Bucharest: Department for Euroatlantic Integration and Defence Policy, MoD, 2002), pp. 6-7.

<sup>355</sup> The U.S. State Department keeps track of general trends in its Annual Report on Narcotics Trafficking. See e.g., [www.state.gov/g/inl/r/s/nrcrpt/2000/index.cfm?docid=892](http://www.state.gov/g/inl/r/s/nrcrpt/2000/index.cfm?docid=892).

entered a precipitous decline in 1997 – the first year of the Constantinescu administration – decreasing by 70% to 1.5 tons.<sup>356</sup> The decline continued in 1998 with only 785 kilograms captured, dropped by a further 85% in 1999 to 119 kilograms, and made a modest recovery to 407 kilograms in 2000.<sup>357</sup> Total drug captures during the 1997-2000 Constantinescu administration amounted to less than one-half the seizures of 1996 alone and only 10% of the more than 25 tons captured in 2001, the first year of the 2001-2004 Iliescu administration. This remarkable jump in drug captures continued with over 30 tons seized during the first six months 2002.<sup>358</sup>

Despite this credible performance, corruption scandals continue to plague the central structures and leading personnel of the interior ministry, and have contributed to adverse trends in public attitudes.<sup>359</sup> For example, a World Bank study of March 2001 ranked the police among the most corrupt along with (and within 10 percentage points of) parliamentarians, the courts and prosecutors, and government ministers.<sup>360</sup> A poll of July 2002 found that 51% of the population believe that the most corrupt personnel are in the central structures, and 30% consider that the police are the most corrupt of all occupational categories (followed by magistrates, parliamentarians, government officials, and politicians). The perception of rampant corruption in the central structures of the ministry of interior and the police contributes to negative public attitudes towards law enforcement bodies. In terms of relative standing, 51% of those polled believe that half or more of police officials are corrupt, while 26% consider the SRI as mostly corrupt and only 14% feel the same about the military. However, public trust in the police (averaging 45%

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<sup>356</sup> Drug captures are given in the annual balance presented by the ministry of interior and are reported by the press. See also, *Ministerul de Interne, Situatia confiscarile de droguri in Romania la 28 septembrie 2001*.

<sup>357</sup> The authorities responsible for this performance included Presidential National Security Counselor Dorin Marian (1996-2000), Interior Ministers Gavril Dejeu (1997-1999) and Constantin Dudu Ionescu (1999-2000), SRI director Costin Georgescu (1997-2000) and SIE chief Catalin Harnagea (1997-2000).

<sup>358</sup> The responsible authorities include Presidential National Security Counselor Ioan Talpes, Interior Minister Ioan Rus, SRI director Radu Timofte and SIE director George Fulga.

<sup>359</sup> One of the most publicized cases involved Police General Toma Zaharia, whose wife was commercial director of SINTOFARM, a pharmaceutical company that imported large quantities of heroin precursor drug that subsequently disappeared from its inventory. Zaharia remained on post and was not the object of official investigation.

<sup>360</sup> *Diagnostic Surveys of Corruption in Romania*, Bucharest, World Bank, March 2001, pp. vii and 5.

during 1998-2002) is relatively higher than elsewhere in Central Europe.<sup>361</sup>

### **Military Restructuring, Professionalization and Conscription**

As noted, Romania downsized its active service peacetime army by 60% since 1989 to less than 96,000 in 2002. A peacetime force target of 75,000 has been set for the year 2007. Restructuring efforts are now aimed at eliminating the reverse pyramid of officer ranks and increasing the number of NCOs until a ratio of three NCOs to each officer is achieved. Over 5,000 senior officers have been made redundant since December 2000. Serious political backlash was avoided primarily because of the RAF's transparent personnel management system, implemented in 2001 and reviewed and modified in the spring and summer of 2002, which incorporates promotion boards for all ranks, standard procedures for evaluation, clear evaluation criteria for advancement and redundancy, and obligatory competition for posts.

Conscription has increasingly diminished over the last 10 years, with currently less than 15,000 called-up annually in a population of more than 22 million. According to the Romanian Constitution, military service is obligatory for all males 20 years of age.<sup>362</sup> Conscientious objectors have been able to choose alternative service to the community since 1997.<sup>363</sup> Voluntary enlistment currently yields a greater number of apt recruits. The number of volunteers and applicants to institutions of military education are both on the increase.

In response to modernization and reform needs, the MOD has pursued reforms based on the presumption of an all-professional service and has publicly emphasized its efforts in building a smaller professional volunteer army. During 2001, the MOD prepared draft legislation reducing obligatory service from 12 to 8 months (and from 6 to 4 months for university graduates), establishing an alternative civic service, and providing a payment-in-lieu-of-service option.<sup>364</sup> In dis-

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<sup>361</sup> This average is from seven polls conducted by MMT since 1998. During the same period, Czech public trust in the police averaged 36.5%. Ivan Gabal, Lenka Helsusova, and Thomas S. Szayna, *The Impact of NATO Membership in the Czech Republic: Changing Czech Views of Security, Military & Defence* #G107(S) (Camberley, England: The Conflict Studies Research Centre, March 2002), p. 9.

<sup>362</sup> Romanian Constitution, Article 52, and Law no. 46/1996.

<sup>363</sup> Government Decision no. 618/1997.

<sup>364</sup> *Comunicat M.Ap.N. nr.55/8 feb – Precizari SMG privind executarea serviciului military*, [www.mapn.ro](http://www.mapn.ro).

cussions with the parliamentary defence committees, the MoD suggested that the complete elimination of conscription might be preferable to a radical reduction of service time that could result in poor and ineffective training. A more proactive stance was adopted in February 2002, after two conscripts shot their commanding officer and killed two civilians. On 1 March 2002, the MOD proposed an amendment to the Romanian Constitution that would phase out conscription entirely beginning in 2003.

A majority of Romanians at all income levels support the creation of a smaller, professional active peacetime force, whether downsizing is presented purely as a requirement for NATO membership or as a means of achieving a more effective, modern force.<sup>365</sup> This support is highest among the 18-55 year age bracket, with those over 55 years of age almost evenly split on the issue.<sup>366</sup> Public support for shifting from a conscript to a fully professional military has increased from 60% in October 2001 to 70% in May 2002. Part of this shift is connected with the greater prestige and credibility that professional units serving alongside NATO forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Afghanistan have brought both the RAF and Romania. Indeed, foreign credibility ranked third among the “main advantages” of joining NATO and the EU in polls during 2000 and 2001. Increased public support also reflects an understanding that professional forces are required to discharge the increasingly dangerous missions that Romanian forces are undertaking.

As the RAF has increased its public outreach and information efforts – in 2001 alone the MoD issued over 400 press communiqués, more than four times the number of any other ministry – public support for military reforms has gained strength.<sup>367</sup> Significantly, Romanians do not equate military downsizing and restructuring with economic savings, nor do they equate a smaller, professional military with a cheaper military. On the contrary, there is a consistent trend of willingness to support the military and its reform process even when other public sector expenditures might suffer.<sup>368</sup> In 2000, 52% of those polled supported “allocating a larger portion of the GDP for military

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<sup>365</sup> In a MMT poll of May 2002, 52% of the population supported downsizing as a NATO requirement. Two-thirds of the population support downsizing as integral to a smaller professional army. Larry L. Watts, “Ahead of the Curve: The Military-Society Relationship in Romania,” in Timothy Edmunds, Edward Cottey, Anthony Forster, eds., *The Military and Society in Central and Eastern Europe: Legitimacy and Change* (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave, 2003), forthcoming.

<sup>366</sup> The first of a series of MMT polls devoted exclusively to defence and NATO issues was undertaken on 8-12 February 2001.

<sup>367</sup> Sorin Enculescu, “Parliamentary Liaison and Public Opinion.” In: Watts (ed) *Romanian Military Reform*, pp. 37-52.

<sup>368</sup> This trend emerges from polls undertaken by MMT in February 2001 and May 2002 as well as that done by IMAS in May 2000.

reform.” In 2001, 63% supported an increase of defence budgets by reducing the budgetary allocations to other public sectors. This threshold of 63% support was maintained in July 2002 as well.

## THE THREAT, NATO, AND THE EU

Romania is located in an insecure neighbourhood. Disturbances erupted to the south of Romania since 1990 in Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia, and to the north in the Republic of Moldova. Along with this physical insecurity is a continuing potential for economic instability with spill-over effects given the fragility of regional economies (e.g., the collapse of the banking system in Bulgaria in the late 1990s, Moldova’s economic meltdown, and Ukraine’s continuing difficulties). The possibility of military conflict in the region, an expression of worst-case insecurity, has consistently ranked among the top three fears of Romanians over the past decade, although only a quarter of the population conceive of such a threat in terms of a military attack against the country.<sup>369</sup>

It stands to reason, therefore, that the strong and consistent support of the Romanian population for NATO integration is partly due to the felt need to break an insecure isolation and join an effective alliance that has provided stability to its members for half a century. Romanian support for both NATO and the EU has consistently rated the highest in the post-Communist space and significantly higher than public trust in domestic institutions. The single exception occurred during the Kosovo bombardment in April-May 1999 when support for NATO dropped to levels slightly below Poland (57% vs. 60%), although still higher than Hungary and the Czech Republic and on par with Germany and France. Support for NATO rose immediately after the air campaign (to over 60%) as Romanian troops deployed with KFOR forces at the beginning of 2000, indicating that disapproval was directed at the operation rather than the institution.

### Good Opinion/Trustworthiness of Institutions

	3/ 1997	11/ 1998	5/ 1999	5/ 2000	10/ 2000	5/ 2001	10/ 2001	7/ 2002
NATO <sup>370</sup>	82%	67%	57%	73-75.	71%	76-84	68-76	83% <sup>371</sup>

<sup>369</sup> This was a consistent finding in MMT polls for October 2000, May 2001, and May 2002.

<sup>370</sup> Typically, the questions regarding opinion of NATO and the EU are of two varieties: “Do you have a very bad/bad/good/very good opinion of NATO/EU?” and “If a referendum were held tomorrow/next Sunday with the object of Romania’s entrance into NATO/EU, would you vote for/against/at all?” Single percentages indi-

EU	--	--	70%	68%	68%	70-77%	72%	
Military	86%	74%	75%	73%	76%	72%	76%	71%
Police	48%	45%	49%	43%	47%	47%	41%	41%
President	--	40%	38%	20%	--	50%	54%	39%
Government	45%	28%	23%	13%	--	44%	49%	29%
Parliament	29%	20%	20%	9%	--	33%	36%	19%

The polls indicate that Romanians are motivated in their support for NATO primarily by their perceptions of the alliance and the ends it serves. Romanian authorities are conscientious about coupling NATO and EU membership such that the two are not opposed to one another and opinion oscillates concerning which organization is held in greater esteem. According to a poll completed at the end of 2001, the primary action of the Romanian government with which Romanians are most satisfied is "integration in EU/NATO." Asked what the most important objectives for Romania were, 33% responded "EU integration", 30% "NATO integration", and 18% "free circulation" (visa requirements for travel within the Schengen area were eliminated for Romania only in January 2002). Progress regarding these same concerns elicited the most satisfaction with government in July 2002 as well.

However, when national security, rather than western re-integration generally, is at issue, NATO is ascendant. This attitude springs from several sources, including (1) Romanian perceptions regarding Europe's inability to resolve problems in the Balkans or even address them in a unified manner outside of NATO, (2) the perceived dysfunctional prominence of partisan European interests in the region, (3) the reluctance and hesitancy with which Europe has been constructing its own security identity, and (4) the relative effectiveness of NATO (and the USA) in the Balkans and in promoting necessary intelligence and law enforcement cooperation in the post-September 11 environment.<sup>372</sup>

When asked what the "preferred situation for Romania from the perspective of assuring its national security" would be, 59% replied "military alliance with the USA and NATO member countries" in 2000, 62% replied the same the following year, and 72% advocated a USA/NATO alliance as the best means to ensure national security in

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cate responses to the first question only while double percentages indicate responses to both the first and second questions.

<sup>371</sup> Response to "If a referendum were held tomorrow/next Sunday with the object of Romania's entrance into NATO/EU, would you vote for/against/at all?"

<sup>372</sup> For example, the Southeastern European Cooperation Initiative (SECI) to combat cross-border crime has 11 members and shares information with INTERPOL, EUROPOL and NATO organizations but not with the French-controlled International Customs Organization because Paris views SECI as an American initiative.

2002. A similar evolution has occurred regarding Romanian willingness to accept foreign troops stationed in their country. Long a sensitive issue given the effort necessary to oust Soviet troops in 1958, as of 2000 only 31% of the population agreed with the possibility. By 2001, 48% of those polled agreed with the stationing of NATO forces on Romanian territory and, after some direct experience with U.S. NATO forces cycling out of Kosovo through Romanian air and sea-ports, 68% agreed with the prospect of stationing NATO forces on Romanian territory in mid-2002.

In contrast, military alliance with Western European countries alone was considered a viable alternative by only 21% in 2001, dropping to 12 % in 2002. These same trends are also suggested by the evolution of opinion regarding which institutions “contribute effectively to the resolution of European problems.” While the UN and the OSCE experienced a slight increase in public trust (from 68 to 70 percent and from 71 to 72 percent respectively), the EU suffered a slight decline. In contrast, public faith that NATO effectively contributes to resolving European problems rose fairly dramatically from 62% in 2001 to 71% in 2002.

Opinion that NATO acts in defence of the interests of “all of its members” or “the majority of its members” increased from 50% in 2001 to 65% in 2002, while those who believe it to be defending only US interests or the interests of only the “most powerful” members have declined from 51% to 35%. Consequently, the portion of the Romanian public that believes their country’s interests would best be served if NATO played a “powerful leading role in World politics” has steadily increased from 59% in 1998, to 81% in 2001, reaching 88% in 2002. This strong pro-NATO current of public opinion partially explains the ability of Romanian authorities to declare their country a *de facto* military ally of NATO and the USA and then to manifest this in significant deployments of troops to Afghanistan and cooperative undertakings elsewhere in the security sector in the fight against terrorism.

#### LEGITIMATE ROLES OF THE ARMED FORCES

Territorial defence and assistance to domestic authorities during natural disasters enjoy a legitimacy born of tradition and repeated practice. By the same token, military and public attitudes regarding regime defence roles and new normative roles of peace-support, peace-enforcement, and crisis management abroad are also conditioned by the weight of the past. Excessive bloodshed caused by military intervention in defence of government authorities in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century created a backlash within the military and population against the use of the army for internal security purposes throughout the



1920s such that the Romanian General Staff strictly prohibited it in the early 1930s. Before 1989, there was only one exception – a broadly popular intervention to crush a rebellion by the Fascist Iron Guard in January 1941.<sup>373</sup>

Apparently, domestic authorities doubted the military's reliability for regime defence during the Communist era with the consequence that it was not called out against the population before 1989. Indeed, according to Western analysts of the Warsaw Pact, the Romanian military was the least reliable for use against the domestic population.<sup>374</sup> This conclusion was validated when Ceausescu ordered the military against demonstrators in December 1989 whereupon, after initial confusion, the armed forces sided with the protesters and guaranteed the overthrow of the Communist regime.

Romanian troop deployments abroad have a long history. During the early 19<sup>th</sup> century Romanian forces fought with the French Army in Morocco, Italy and Mexico. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the RAF fought alongside Serbian and Bulgarian forces in Bulgaria against the Ottoman Empire. In World War I, Romanian forces were called upon to disarm Bolshevik forces in then-Russian Bessarabia and oust Hungarian Soviet forces in Budapest. In World War II, the RAF fought all the way to Stalingrad and then, after Germany attacked Romania when it tried to withdraw from the war, with Allied forces all the way to Vienna and Prague.<sup>375</sup> Ironically, the 45 years of Communist domination represented the longest period during the last 200 years that Romania has not deployed forces for missions abroad. Aside from Romania's refusal to allow its forces to be used by Moscow against its neighbours (the RAF was the only Warsaw Pact army that did not participate in the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968), as well as the relative rarity of UN peacekeeping missions during the Cold War, the lack of deployments prior to 1990 was due primarily to a territorial defence strategy that presumed a sudden attack from the Soviet Union, necessitating the concentration of all troops within the country.<sup>376</sup>

Given this legacy and the disappearance of the traditional military threat with the collapse of the Soviet Union, it is not surprising that

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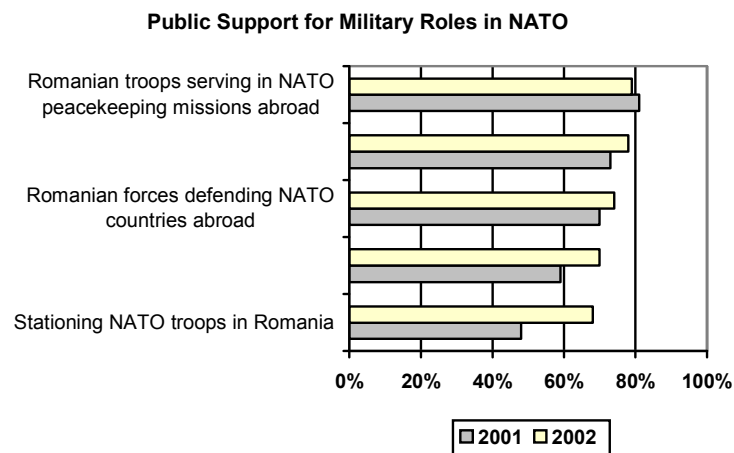
<sup>373</sup> Romania's military dictator explained that even then "he had not wanted to use the Army for the domestic settlement, since he had considered this dangerous for the future of his country." *Documents on German Foreign Policy*, Series D, Volume XI, Document 381, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1967), pp. 662-670.

<sup>374</sup> Walter M. Bacon, Jr., "Romania," in Daniel N. Nelson, editor, *The Soviet Allies: The Warsaw Pact and the Issue of Reliability* (Boulder: Westview, 1984), p. 254.

<sup>375</sup> Mark Axworthy, *Third Axis, Fourth Ally: The Romanian Army in World War II* (London: Arms and Armour, 1996), pp. 185-218.

<sup>376</sup> Mihaila Matei, "Mechanisms of Alliance Contribution: Peace Support and Crisis Response Operations." In Watts (ed) *Romanian Military Reform*, pp. 185-201.

consistently more than three-quarters of the population agrees to the sending of Romanian troops on peace support and enforcement (war fighting) missions abroad. If one takes into account the margin for error ( $\pm 2.8\%$ ), support for such missions has either remained constant or increased since the terrorist attack against the United States on 11 September 2001 and since the first deployment of Romanian forces in Afghanistan in January 2002.



General regional insecurity and the opportunity to do something to address it undoubtedly play a role in this attitude. Peacekeeping missions that further that stability directly promote Romania's national security. Likewise, contribution to NATO missions strengthens the alliance that Romania is depending on for its own security. Its larger role in international peacekeeping and peace enforcement also grants it a "seat at the table" in discussions regarding the future security of the region and of Europe, as well as bolstering its credibility as a legitimate partner for other organizations (e.g. the EU) and in other domains (e.g. economic). Within the RAF, the contribution to reform and to the creation of a modern and professional military made by undertaking joint missions in a fully interoperable environment provides a strong incentive for maximizing participation. Additional individual incentives include the greatly increased base-pay of personnel and the increased opportunities for advancement for personnel with peacekeeping and crisis management experience.

While the RAF has not yet suffered catastrophic losses as a result of this participation, they have incurred nine casualties in Angola, Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan as of July 2002. Public support for these missions has increased despite these casualties. Even when the question was framed more broadly in 2000, including both military

troops and gendarmes, 67% of the population supported that participation, with 61% supporting their subordination to NATO command.<sup>377</sup> The polls indicate that the Romanian population is willing to accept responsibility for regional and broader peace and stability and is currently prepared to pay the costs in treasure and blood that are required by such a role.

## CONCLUSION

The health of the defence and security sector is clearly a priority for most Romanians. Partly, this can be attributed to the insecurity of their region in Europe and the strong desire by an overwhelming percentage of the population to re-integrate into the West and into European and Euro-Atlantic structures. Popular support for the reform process in this domain is closely tied to the high standing of the military and the prestige and security benefits of successful modernization and professionalisation. Positive public attitudes are further generated by the support of European and Euro-Atlantic structures for the reform process given that they are held to be more credible and trustworthy than Romanian state institutions – with the single exception of the RAF. Indeed, public opinion tends to sanction areas of the security sector (e.g., the police) where reform appears to be lagging.

Romanians apparently view military deployments with NATO abroad as an opportunity to play an active role in redressing their insecurity, and the security and prestige benefits that accrue from so doing have contributed to robust support for such missions. The absence of traditional military threats, freeing troops for other uses, and a legacy of participating in missions abroad has created a remarkably high level of public support for the new normative missions of peacekeeping, peace enforcement, and crisis management that, despite some casualties, continues to be robust and has increased in strength over the last several years. In this respect, the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, may have helped solidify this support, but it did not alter the fundamental motivations that underlie it.

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<sup>377</sup> IMAS, May 2000



## **Conclusion the European Public Opinion on Security and Defence: A Good Message for Politicians and Soldiers**

**Marie Vlachová**

The case studies in this book have examined how the European public reacted to recent security challenges. Security has never been one of the more frequent topics of public-opinion polls, mainly because of the complexity of politico-military issues, generally not considered as issues that should be placed under public scrutiny; and, until recently, the marginal character of these issues in the European post-Cold War context also played its role in the relatively small attention paid to public evaluation of security. With the emergence of international terrorism, and the somewhat slow progress in the forging of European Security and Defence Policy, during political debates which accompanied the second wave of NATO enlargement and with the necessity of coping with American attitudes to the struggle against terrorism, the public acceptance of political security decisions gained significant importance. Completion of the transformation of post-communist armed forces, and other institutions of the security sector, the shift from conscript to all-volunteer forces, the new challenges of creating European rapid-reaction forces cannot be achieved without persistent public support, especially when any increase of national security budgets comes into question. More than ever before, therefore, public opinion represents a strategic component of any decision-making.

No wonder the polls became an integral part of political decision-making throughout Europe, for the simple reason that there is no better tool for estimating public reaction to what is going on in policy. In a democratic society, with the overwhelming impact of the media, public opinion represents a very important indicator of the probable outcome of elections, public voting and/or referenda. The introductory chapter by Jan Hartl, dealing with the importance of public opinion in the formation of defence policy, defined, illustratively, the conditions within which the political elite must resolve various political prob-

lems, showing how public opinion becomes a powerful tool of the legitimacy of political decision at national and international levels. Hartl argues that, in order to understand the complexity of the present world, requires one to learn how people perceive it, and to use this knowledge in developing the methods of how new concepts and ideas – including security issues – can be communicated to the public.

There are restrictions concerning availability, validity and reliability of polls in security and defence issues, which have to be taken into consideration while dealing with public views on security. People define security as the basic conditions giving them feeling of safety against violence, crime and social insecurity. Security according to popular views is much more connected with the safety of everyday-life than with far-reaching political concepts and ideas. To study how these concepts are transformed in the subjective interpretation of the public requires strict adherence to certain methodological principles. Among them, one should mention the recognition of the state of opinion, the awareness that we are dealing with deeply-rooted values (or semi-stable attitudes or even fragile and volatile views and beliefs), and the necessity to evaluate results of polls in a broader political and cultural framework so as to be able to understand their internal dynamism. The fact that public opinion has been stratified into groups defined by demographic and other criteria (age, education, gender, political orientation, etc.) is broadly accepted, while the necessity to have an additional knowledge of the opinion of expert groups, state actors, politicians and other opinion leaders seems to be rather neglected. Public opinion is not about measuring how many inhabitants agree with a certain decision or view, but about interpreting the data in a broader societal context. The most precious results arise from trend analyses, investigating the process of creation of an opinion; unfortunately, such surveys are very demanding from the point of financing, time investment and expertise. In this volume, two trend analyses have been included: the chapter on public opinion on defence policy in the countries of the European Union by Philippe Manigart, and the study on NATO membership in aspiring countries by Alina Zilberman and Stephen Webber.

The authors were dependent upon data available and, with the exception of the two chapters mentioned above, the case studies cannot be considered as comparative in a strict methodological sense. Fully comparative results could be achieved only by a common survey carried out upon unified samples, identical questionnaires and shared methods of data sampling, processing and interpreting. Unfortunately, to carry out such a survey in Western, Central and Eastern Europe, and devoted to a wide scope of security and defence issues, was not in Geneva DCAF's possibilities; thus, opinions on security and defence have been analysed on the basis of available results. This does not di-

minish the value of the studies since, even if not strictly comparable, they manage to bring rich and empirically-underpinned materials documenting both general trends and occasional shifts in public perceptions of various aspects of security. Generally, the authors highlight perceptions of threats to security, attitudes to the European Union and NATO, and public trust towards security institutions. Special attention has been paid to public understanding of roles, missions, reforms and format changes of national armed forces.

Philippe Manigarts' elucidates the development in public attitudes to security, defence and armed forces within Western Europe. The study provides evidence that the predictions of some experts of growing scepticism and apathy in the public towards the armed forces after the end of the Cold War have not proved true. On the contrary, the popularity of the armed forces in EU countries has increased in the last five years, their roles being seen equally in national defence and in non-military tasks. As concerns their format, the all-volunteer forces are seen as the best solution for the future. The common awareness of a collective European defence is emerging slowly, but gradually. The public picture of the common European Security and Defence Policy is still opaque, reflecting the real state of the common defence policy in Europe. Philippe Manigart envisages even more public attention being paid to security and defence issues and predicts further positive attitudes to the widening scope of the existing roles of armed forces as consequences of 9/11.

While the collective defence has been in what one could call a state of birth, the public image of NATO in the candidate countries of the second wave of enlargement has been positive and stable. Analysing results of the polls conducted by several prestigious national and international agencies and organisations, Alina Zilberman and Stephen Webber came to the conclusion that, by the middle of 2002, the public support for NATO membership in the seven so called 'Big Bang' countries<sup>378</sup> could be characterised as reasonably grounded within a variety of considerations such as matters of security, economy and culture. In the middle of 2002, the public attitudes to NATO shifted, from emotional and volatile ones, to a more knowledgeable and committed nature of support.

A rather exceptional, but extremely interesting case study on the relationship between public opinion and policy makers is exhibited by Switzerland, with its principle of neutrality, militia system and a plebiscitary democracy. In the Swiss political culture, manifestations of public opinion (expressed in votes or gained through demoscopic

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<sup>378</sup> Bulgaria, Romania, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia, the aspirant countries that were invited to membership during the Prague summit in November 2002.

methods) have great impact on political decision-making. Analysing public opinion on defence and military issues, and concentrating mainly on the public reaction to the governmental attempts to reform the system operating since the 60s, Karl Haltiner comes to the conclusion that traditional views on defence and the military will also prevail in the future. The historical legacy, consisting of the evident advantage of compulsory military service which the Swiss have experienced in the past, and the strong identification of the military with the roles of nation-builder and nation-defender, has been lingering in Switzerland for centuries and will definitely continue to influence public opinion for a long time to come. However, there are indications that the country is slowly and cautiously adapting to European trends of new security and defence structures, especially a shift to all-volunteer forces and change of missions, among which one can identify the engagement in international operations such as the ones beginning to prevail in European countries.

All three Central-European studies (namely Polish, Hungarian and Slovak) indicate similarities in the process of the building-up of public opinion towards security and defence issues. The public-opinion institutes established before WWII were closed or put under strict control of the Communist Parties, since Communists insisted on the dominant role of only one segment of society, namely the working class with its avant-garde, the Party, and did not need plurality and diversity of civil society which required a reflection of public opinions. Only after the fall of Communism did the public opinion gain its true meaning, working as an instrument for the feedback of political decision-making and as a tool enabling the understanding of the profound changes in societies which opted for democracy.

The studies representing Central Europe pay a great deal of attention to the public image of NATO. For most Poles, the Alliance became a core security institution in the last decade. NATO accession was seen as the most visible result of a move away from Russia into the Western zone and the changed position of Poland on the international scene. Nevertheless, the public backing for obligations (such as the participation of the Polish troops in military operations, stationing of NATO troops on Polish territory, placing nuclear weapons in the country) was definitely lower than for the membership itself. NATO military intervention in the Balkans was a turning point in the public thinking of the Alliance. Prior to the Kosovo operation, the public in Poland was prepared to accept only such foreign deployment of Polish troops that would be connected with classical peacekeeping. The case of Kosovo meant that Polish society had to learn quickly the difference between being part of the Warsaw Pact and a member of NATO, and that it began to understand the full extent of responsibilities that would come with that membership. Agnieszka Gogolewska connects



shifts in public opinion with significant events on the international scene, coming to the conclusion that membership of NATO and the conflicts after the accession (the Balkan wars, the wars in Chechnya and in Afghanistan) changed the public perception of security, which ceased to be understood in the narrow context of peace at home and in the neighbourhood.

The Hungarian case illustrates the closeness between the security-sector reform and the overall reform of political, legal, economic and social institutions. It was the public that pushed politicians ahead in defining the reform goals, priorities and conditions in the areas of security and defence. Comparing the results of a multinational survey on NATO accession in the three countries of the first wave, Zoltan Kiss shows that, in spite of the fact that the Kosovo crisis in 1999 was a severe test to the public image of the Alliance among the fresh members, the public of the three Central-European states remained positive towards the organization. The low interest of the Slovak public for security and defence issues at the beginning of the 90s has changed gradually with the building-up of a new security sector and the political heading of international institutions. While the interest of Slovaks in joining the European Union has always been high, the issue of the second strategic orientation of the Slovak foreign policy concerning membership of the North Atlantic Alliance has not been accepted in a positively unambiguous manner; furthermore, the development of the Slovak public view on NATO was even more contradictory and dramatic.

Moving further to the East, the picture of public opinion on security and defence becomes more colourful, but also fuzzier. Mykola Churylov states that the Ukrainian public shares the view of the official doctrine of the country's government, but its perception of Western states and institutions has been deeply rooted in the history of the Cold-War Era. It is especially the older generation, namely people with lower education, supporters of left-wing parties and inhabitants of eastern regions and Crimea, prefer a future alliance with the Eastern-Slav bloc of former Soviet states (Russia and Byelorussia) to an alliance with the West. The prevailing inclination towards the European Union has not been accompanied with positive attitudes to NATO, towards which quite a strong and stable group of opponents has appeared recently. Significantly, half of the inhabitants of Ukraine have not made up their minds as regards the possibility of future Ukrainian membership of the Alliance. The rather contradictory character of public views on defence can be illustrated by the low trust of the Ukrainians towards the professional qualities and the defence capabilities of their domestic armed forces. In spite of a cautious attitude to NATO, most of the inhabitants doubt that any reform of the military can be achieved without support from abroad.

The study of Vladimir Rukavishnikov accentuates the complex character of Russian security, influenced by factors such as the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the geographical closeness of some conflict zones to Russian borders, and the challenge to Russian territorial integrity caused by the Chechnya wars. In public opinion, this complexity is reflected by an increasing number of the citizens who are concerned with external enemies, especially by Islamic fundamentalism. Nevertheless, the major threats are connected to the domestic situation where crime, corruption, and poverty are important factors. Only one-third of the population trust the defence capabilities of the national armed forces, where confidence has been severely damaged during the Chechnya wars. Therefore, the idea of the shift to all-volunteer forces has gained a certain popularity in Russia. The Russians changed their originally-favourable image of NATO, which was evident at the beginning of the 90s, and nowadays the majority of them consider this organization as an aggressive military alliance and, in fact, see it as the main threat to Russia. Vladimir Rukavishnikov does not consider it as a return to the traditional Cold-War pattern of thinking, but rather a reverberation of the Kosovo crisis. Despite the unfavourable image of the Alliance, the majority of the Russians support the expansion of collaboration with NATO that has emerged after September 11.

Public opinion in the Balkan countries reflects the uneasy development of the region during the last decade, as well as the different stages of their security reform. The Slovenian case is characterised by increasing public awareness of non-military threats, namely ecological and socio-economic ones. The military are still a highly-trusted institution, but a shift in perception of its roles and format are beginning to be visible. Public support for territorial-defence tasks has diminished, while the peacekeeping missions are perceived as more prestigious. In spite of strong support for territorial defence in the first years of independence, the post-modern inclination towards all-volunteer forces has been emerging among the young generation. NATO and Slovenian membership of it are supported hugely by the political elites, but the public is rather reluctant, showing only 53 per cent support for the accession in polls conducted during 2002. There is no single explanation for the fact and, as suggested by Ljubica Jelušić, the public will probably need more time to adapt to the idea of membership: the existence of one-fourth of those undecided for membership makes such a suggestion highly probable. Slovenia represents a typical example of a country where the public approach to security shifted from unanimous support of the forces defending and protecting the country at the time of external threat to a dispersed, unclear and, in some aspects, even contradictory state of views on security more relevant for times of peace.

Similarly, the public opinion on security and defence in Serbia and Montenegro has been rather unstable, with significant diversification of opinions and a relatively large group of those undecided. However, it is evident that the number of supporters for streamlining the security-sector reform has begun to grow, albeit the achievement of the full democratic control of security institutions, transparency and openness in security policy may not be fast and easy. There is a generational gap between the people up to 30 years old and other age cohorts. Young people are inclined to the Western-type of security sector. They wish to solve security problems via a closer integration with European structures, mainly with the Partnership for Peace Programs, they support downsizing and the modernization of the armed forces, as well as the abolishment of conscript service. Even the idea of closer cooperation with NATO, which understandably has not found many supporters among the Serbian population due to the NATO Air Campaign in 1999, seems to be better accepted by young people. Lingered memories of the recent wars and unsolved problems in Kosovo make people more sensitive to the threats both from neighbouring regions with mixed ethnicity and from the USA, the latter being still considered the enemy by almost forty per cent of the Serbian population. The armed forces represent the most prestigious state institution, together with the Serbian Orthodox Church. Milorad Timotić argues that such high esteem stems from history, in which the Serbian armed forces played the role of nation-builder and nation-defender, and from the glorification of the Serbian military past which has been passed onto younger generations through education and by the fact that a feeling of insecurity still prevails among the Serbian population. In spite of this high prestige, however, the citizens do not wish any military interventions being built into policy-making.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the public opinion to security has been affected not only by war experience but, principally, by the changes taking place within the 'post-Dayton' state. BiH has been a typical country in transition, where fully-functional state institutions are still in the process of being established, as the security institutions are constructed around ethnic principles, and only recently have stopped being financed from Croatia and Yugoslavia. The high public esteem of the military stems from the memories of their fight on behalf of ethnic groups during the war in 1992-1995. Nevertheless, Bisera Turković accentuates shifts in public views on security and defence issues, such as the strong support to the integration of BiH into European structures and NATO. Although ethnicity is still a potent force, people mostly fear non-military threats, such as poverty, unemployment and crime, and the integration into Western structures has been seen as a way out of the economic stagnation. The growing public confidence in government and security institutions, and the prevail-

ing support for some vital security problems (such as the necessity of reducing the military), are shared by all ethnic groups and may indicate the growing power of public opinion on this country's policy.

The Macedonian case is rather specific, since public-opinion polls have not become an inseparable part of the Macedonian political scene, and the debate on security and defence issues is still weak, having been "replaced with groundless optimism and/or a constant fear of real and imagined threats", as pointed out by Biljana Vankovska. The polls are carried out only occasionally, and the results are often kept secret from the public or are published in a biased way. The meagre sources show that the war is still present in people's minds but, as in other European countries, security is perceived in a broader sense, namely as one of the basic conditions which create the environment for economic development, job safety and democracy. Nevertheless, as in other successor states of Yugoslavia, the prestige of the defence forces, regardless of whether they are military or paramilitary, is still very high in comparison with other state institutions.

Yantsislav Yanakiev has accentuated the changing perception of threats. The Bulgarians think that the non-military threats such as crime, drug trafficking poverty – which result in social conflicts – are the most menacing factors for the regions; however, as in other countries, the public awareness of the danger represented by international terrorism has increased dramatically after September 11. The armed forces are the most prestigious institution, but the prestige of the military profession has decreased due to the rather meagre working conditions in comparison to those of other jobs. The reform of the armed forces has public support, and the inhabitants have begun to envisage the future forces as all-volunteer ones. Some new roles are ascribed to them, such as policing of the state borders, participation in the anti-terrorist war and some non-military missions connected, in turn, with help towards the national economy. NATO membership has strong support among the public, although there are some discrepancies which are typical of almost all candidate countries. For instance, only one-half of Bulgarian citizens is persuaded that the membership will guarantee national and regional security but, on the other hand, the Bulgarians are ready to cope with basic obligations of the membership (such as increase of budget, participation in peacekeeping and peace-support operations, open sky for NATO planes).

From opinions among the Romanian public, a strong desire for re-integration into the West has been visible from the early 90s. According to Larry Watts, such an unambiguous and long-lasting inclination can be explained both by economic and security incentives. The armed forces, and actually the whole security sector, enjoy high public prestige, being perceived as envoys of the country to the West and defenders of the country's sovereignty in their turbulent region. The

public see NATO membership and non-traditional missions of Romanian Armed Forces as an opportunity for their country to play an active role in redressing their insecurity, and to gain more importance on the international scene. People are persuaded that substantial reform steps – such as restructuring of the armed forces, reconfiguration of military personnel, the downsizing of the officer corps and heading for all-volunteer forces – are inevitable for the achievement of quality, which would guarantee a fully-fledged membership of the Alliance. The terrorist attack of September 11 has further strengthened such views.

At the time of writing this conclusive paragraph, namely at the beginning of 2003, the public opinion in many European capitals made itself visible in demonstrations against the war in Iraq. In spite of the fact that most Europeans expressed their disagreement with the willingness of their governments to support the United States, the public opinion in Europe has been in harmony with the establishment as concerns fundamental solutions of present security threats. The various publics are aware that the terrorist attack on the United States has revealed the illusory notion of diminishing security threats. They share their belief in the solutions embedded in security and military documents. Great importance is attached to security institutions and the armed forces of all countries covered in our volume enjoy a high degree of public esteem. People are in harmony with the changing military mission, wanting their militaries to achieve the capabilities to deal both with national defence and missions abroad such as peacekeeping and peace reinforcement. Armed forces are ascribed an important role in the combat with terrorism. The acceptance of non-traditional missions of armed forces has been visible across Europe, such changes in perception of military missions being evident especially among the public in post-communist states. In the ex-Yugoslavia, countries that have experienced the engagement of their forces in recent wars, show a very high degree of esteem towards their militaries but, at the same time, they desire a strong civilian control of the armed forces and their release from influencing domestic policy. It is especially in the views of the young generation that the future of the militaries is seen in their full professionalization. All-volunteer forces are connected mainly with the future of the militaries of NATO members or candidates to such membership, but even in Ukraine and Russia people are aware of the necessity to improve the professional qualities of their armed forces. Here, again, governmental intentions must be balanced with the prevailing opinion of the public, this harmony being evident across all Europe. It is NATO that divides the public from the establishment in the various Eastern European countries and in the Balkans. While in Central Europe NATO became a desirable reality in the eyes of the public, people in Russia and Ukraine are more reluctant. The closer

geographically to the theatre of the recent Kosovo crisis, the more fuzzy the opinions become, and the more frequent the discrepancies between the policy of the establishment and the opinion of the public that one finds. Nevertheless, generally, and probably with the exception of some countries of the ex-Yugoslavia, the hesitant opinions concern more the NATO Air Campaign in 1999 than this institution itself. In the second half of 2002, one finds that, in all the NATO-candidate countries, the prevailing (even though a somewhere rather cautious) "yes" to such membership could be heard. The existing experience indicates that public acceptance of the enlargement has not been an automatic process, and that the public needs some time to weigh up the "pros" and "cons" of this membership.

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## **Centre for Civil-Military Relations, Belgrade**

The *Centre for Civil-Military Relations* in Belgrade is a non-governmental, independent, non-profit and non-political association of citizens. It deals with research, information and education. It was established in 1997.

The *Centre* has integrated researchers with various scientific qualifications who possess theoretical and practical experiences from the military organization.

The *Centre* has established cooperation with many domestic and foreign non-governmental organizations. It develops professional cooperation and exchange of information with individuals and similar institutions.

In organizing and carrying out research on civil-military relations, as well as through cooperation with similar domestic and international associations and scientific institutions, the *Centre* strives:

- ◇ To contribute to the increase of transparency of civil-military relations in the FR Yugoslavia;
- ◇ To animate the professional and political interest of citizens, their associations, political parties, parliamentary and state organs for a modern organization of civil-military relations in the FR Yugoslavia;
- ◇ To raise and stimulate public interest in the increase of rationality and efficiency of the FRY system of defense;
- ◇ To emphasize the need and support a faster inclusion of the FRY in regional and other international collective security organizations;
- ◇ To assist media, through various educational programs, in better understanding of civil-military relations;

So far the Centre has completed the following research and informative-educational projects:

- *Workshop for Civilian Control of the Army and Police* – a seminar for the media and journalists carried out in Belgrade and 9 other cities in Serbia and Montenegro. Completed in April 2000.
- *Normative Prerequisites for Civilian Control of the Army and Police in Serbia/Yugoslavia* – project completed in August 2000 in cooperation with the Center for Advanced Legal Studies, a NGO from Belgrade.
- The Centre has held four round tables with the subjects from its field of research:  
*Civil-Military Relations in the FRY* (May 1998), *Media Image of the Army of Yugoslavia* (September 1998 in cooperation with the Media

Center from Belgrade), *Army and Police in Ethnic Conflicts* (December 1998 in cooperation with the Forum for Ethnic Relations), *The Army of Yugoslavia at the Watershed of Crisis* (August 1999 in cooperation with the Civic Alliance of Serbia),

- *The Effects of the Changes of the Law on the Army of Yugoslavia* (December 2002, co-organizer with the Center for Anti-War Action)
- In cooperation with the Belgrade Centre for Human rights the Centre held a scientific conference *Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms in the Army of Yugoslavia* (January 2001)
- *Democratic Civilian Control of the Army of Yugoslavia* – a conference organized in April 2001, together with the FRY Federal Ministry of Defense.
- *Security Inclusion of the FRY in Partnership for Peace and Euro-Atlantic Community* – an international conference organized with the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces and NATO Office for Information and Press, in September 2001.
- *Armed Forces Reform – Experiences and Challenges* – an international conference organized in cooperation with Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defense of the FRY and European Movement in Serbia, November 2002, Belgrade.

Current projects include:

- *Protection of Human Rights in the Army and Police of the FR Yugoslavia* – a project in the final stage of completion
- *TV Workshop for Democratic Control of the Army* – project for 7 TV programs prepared in cooperation with the Production Group TV Network from Belgrade.
- *Informative-Educative Seminars on Democratic Civilian Control of the Armed Forces* – for members of the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense and Yugoslav Army General Staff in collaboration with the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces

So far the Centre has published three books: *Civilian Control of the Army and Police* (2000), in Serbian and English. *Democratic Control of the Army and Police in Yugoslavia – Normative Prerequisites* (2001) in Serbian, and *Chronic Shortage of Security – the Case of Yugoslavia* (2001) in Serbian, *Legal Framing of the Democratic Control of Armed Forces and the Security Sector: Norms and Reality/ies* (2001) in English only, *Compendium of Yugoslav Laws on the Security Sector: Human Rights and Democratic Oversight Aspects* (2002) in Serbian and English, *Looking Ahead: Security Challenges in the Balkans through 2010* (2002), in English and Serbian, as an executive publisher. The Centre has also published six issues of the Center's *Bulletin* in Serbian and one issue in English.

A collection of papers, *Protection of Human Rights in the Army and Police of the FRY* will be published very soon.

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The post-Cold War transformation of armed forces has been the most visible part of a much broader reform of security sector, its salience arising from their potential effect on state's sovereignty, from the size of their organizational structure, personnel and budget. This reform is deeply embedded in the overall transition towards a democratic political system, free labour market economy and socially stable societies. The relations between the military and its society also includes public image and prestige of the armed forces, expressing societal understanding of their new missions and goals, trust in the ability to fulfil these goals and a common awareness of the necessity for them to be reformed. Knowledge of public perceptions of security and defence facilitates recognition, whether a coveted balance between political decision-making and civil society exists or not. That is why public opinion polls remain an important analytical tool not only prior to elections but also for measuring public support for the various aspects of government policy.

Theodor Winkler